



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

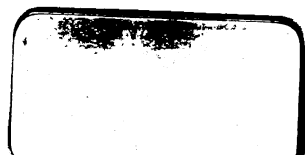
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES

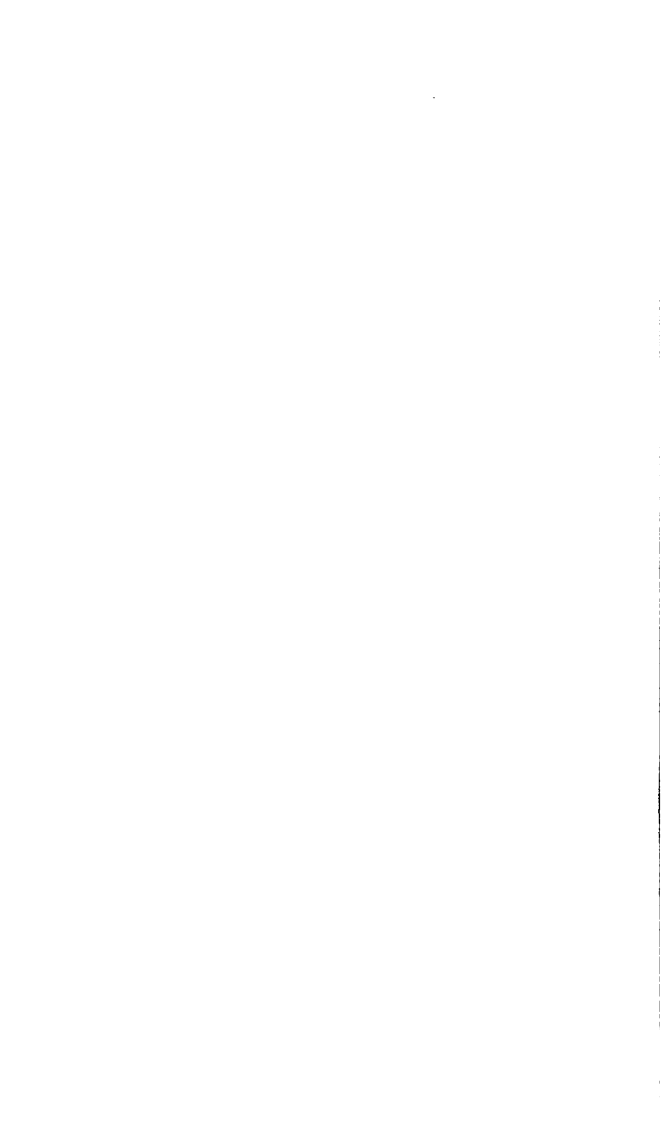


3 3433 07572312 6

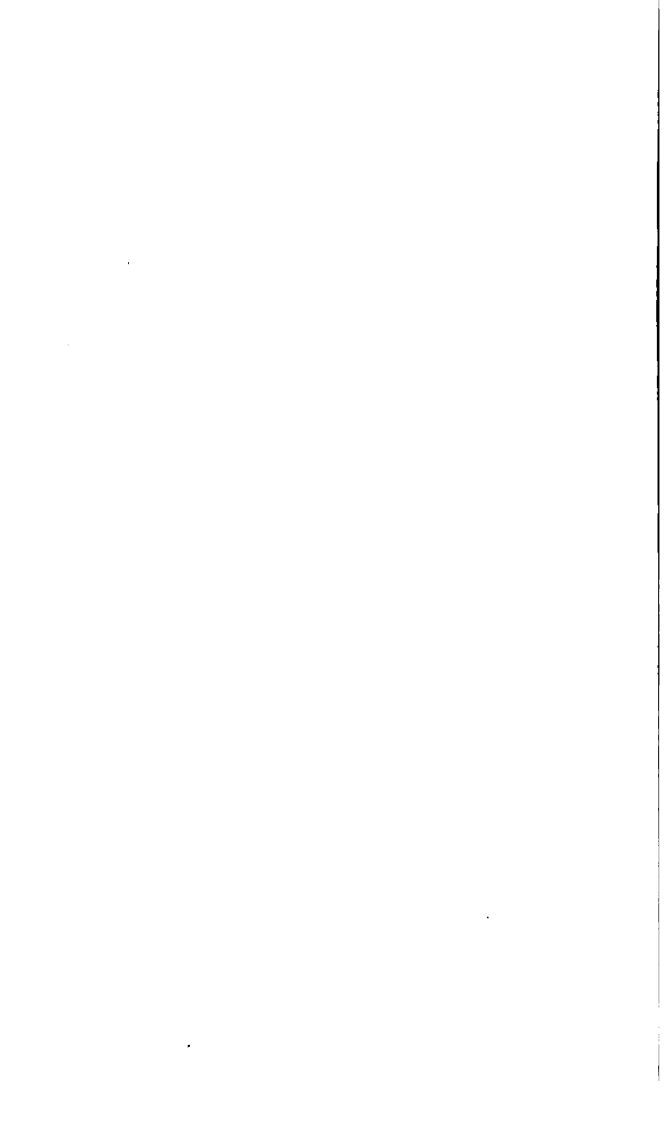


NCW  
Roche









# NOCTURNAL VISIT,

A TALE.

---

BY MARIA REGINA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, MAID OF  
THE HAMLET, VICAR OF LANSDOWNE, AND  
CLERMONT.

---

"Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,  
"That I would speak to thee."

SHAKESPEARE.

---

VOL. I.

---

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN CONRAD, & CO. NO. 30, CHESTNUT  
STREET, PHILADELPHIA; M. & I. CONRAD, & CO.  
NO. 144, MARKET-STREET, BALTIMORE; AND RAPIN,  
CONRAD, & CO. WASHINGTON CITY.

H. MAXWELL, PRINTER.

.....  
1801.

f. D. B.

Rock

1. Fiction, American. ??

Irish p. 203.

THE NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

982893A

ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

B 1938 L

# NOCTURNAL VISIT.

---

## CHAP. I.

---

" Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for pow'r  
" By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour ;  
" Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
" More bent to raise the wretched than to rise."

GOLDSMITH.

---

IN a little hamlet called Wyefield, situated between Chester and Holywell, and about two miles from the great road, there lived, many years ago, a curate, of the name of Greville, whose memory is loved and venerated by all who had the happiness of knowing him: like the good pastor so beautifully described in Goldsmith's Deserted Village, he was, though "not passing rich," dear to all the country round, from his "unaffected sanctity" and simplicity of manners.

He practised what he preached; and though a narrow income sometimes compelled him to bound his charities, his benevolence knew no limitations. With cheerful alacrity he visited the sick and the afflicted, administering to their wants, and calm-

ing their perturbations. He divested death of its terrors; he alleviated the horrors of guilt; he comforted and supported the dismayed, by dwelling upon that passage in the sacred volume of heaven, which says, a broken and a contrite heart shall not be rejected:

....." At his controul  
 " Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul,  
 " Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise  
 " And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise."

Previous to his becoming an inhabitant of Wyefield he had mixed a good deal in the busy world, and from what he had seen and suffered during his intercourse therein, he was happy to find himself far removed from it. Few men indeed had ever experienced greater deceit, cruelty, and ingratitude; and independent of the disgust his injuries naturally inspired him with against it, he deemed himself totally unqualified for it, from wanting that "patient merit," so necessary for the indigent and dependent to possess, in order to enable them to bear, with some degree of calmness, the "oppressor's wrong," the proud man's scorn, "the insolence of office," and the various ills and indignities which the unworthy and unfeeling are so apt to heap upon the children of adversity.

For a wounded spirit and contracted income, no place could be better adapted than Wyefield. Its inhabitants, with very few exceptions, were simple and good natured, and its luxuriant soil, and vicinity to Chester, rendered the necessaries of life easily attainable; it consisted of houses chiefly in the cottage style, built upon a verdant green, or rather valley, which lay between pleasant hills of easy ascent, and was beautifully planted with

elms and chesnuts, round many of whose ponderous and moss-covered trunks, benches were placed for the accommodation of the village politicians; the venerable woods of Gwytherin-hall, which completely embosomed a stately mansion, the ancient seat of the noble family of that name, to whom the hamlet, with an immense tract of adjoining land, belonged, terminated it at one extremity, and at the other it was crossed by a fine trout stream,

“ In which the willows dipt

“ Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink ;”

and o'er which a rustic bridge was thrown, that led into the heart of a highly cultivated country, where neat farms, handsome mansions, rich pastures, and fine woodlands presented themselves in charming variety to the eye.

The appearance of Wyefield was altogether neat, cheerful and picturesque; its cottages peeped amidst tufted trees, or rose amidst gardens, rich in the treasures of the flowery as well as vegetable world; and the hills being in many parts too low to exclude the prospect of the adjacent country, it commanded several fine and extensive views, particularly of the sea (enlivened by the beautiful and ever-varying scenery of the waters), and of the mountains of North-Wales...those almost inaccessible retreats of the ancient Britons, dark, congregated, and piled upon each other in rude confusion, like the disjointed fragments of a demolished world.

The dwelling of Mr. Greville was only distinguished from the habitations of his neighbours, by the peculiar taste with which the ground belonging to it was laid out. It stood in the midst.



of a large garden, which was enclosed from the green by a low hedge of hawthorn, kept in the nicest order; and behind it rose the hill, upon whose summit the village church was built, and up whose gentle acclivity aged trees formed a long cathedral walk, shading with their spreading and intertwined branches the grass-grown graves of many of the rude forefathers of the hamlet.

Flaunting honeysuckles crept o'er the white walls of the cottage, wantoned upon its roof, and in summer cast a delightful shade upon its little casemented-windows, before which clumps of flowering shrubs, and buds of delicious flowers were raised. Here roses and lavender emitted their choicest fragrance;

“ Here soft carnations shower'd their balmy dews,

“ Here lillies smil'd, in virgin robes of white,

“ The thin undress of superficial light.”

The luxuriant shades of Gwytherin-hall were immediately stretched before it; and through the parted trees, it commanded several fine and romantic prospects, especially of a noble sheet of water, (dotted with small picturesque islands), which serpentized to a considerable extent, between banks of the most beautiful verdure, till it appeared lost to the admiring eye, in the dark and tangled mazes of a distant grove which skirted the old mansion.

This charming seat, notwithstanding the many beauties it possessed, had long been neglected by its owner, who led, as common fame reported, a life of unbounded dissipation and extravagance on the continent. His desertion had caused it to be almost totally neglected, so that many of the ornamental buildings, the proud boast of former days, were falling to decay, and most of the shrubberies overgrown with weeds and rank luxuriance.

Though the inhabitants of the hamlet had free access to the demesne, few availed themselves of the privilege of walking in it, preferring a ramble round their own cultivated fields, or the cottages of their neighbours, to its nearly ruined and solitary grounds.

Not so Mr. Greville; he delighted in the solemn grandeur of its woods, the soothing murmur of its falling waters, the deep retirement of its twilight groves, so well calculated to tranquillize the passions, and to peace unfelt before,

“To purest harmony attune the soul,

“Wean it from earth, and wing its flight to heav’n.”

Yet was the pleasure, resulting from profound quiet and uninterrupted meditation, frequently embittered by sadness and regret, at beholding the ruin into which all around seemed hastening, and “indignation at the tastelessness of mortal men, who, in their race through life, o’erlook the real enjoyments of it.”

Such tastelessness, such folly, he thought, could only be occasioned by a constant residence amidst scenes of dissipation.

“Oh! happy am I,” he would exclaim, whenever such an idea occurred, “Oh! happy am I at being far removed from such scenes...from a world, whose spells, like those of a fell enchantress, have power to blind the judgment, vitiate the taste, destroy the health, and weaken the understanding! Misguided by it, its votaries forego real enjoyments, such as exalt the soul, compose the feelings, and invigorate the constitution! Of the truth of this, the owner of this lovely and neglected seat is a striking example. Where could he experience such pure and permanent pleasures as would result to him from dwelling among his

own people, inquiring into their wants, relieving their distresses, and encouraging their industry? Or how could his pride be more nobly gratified, than by supporting the honours of his ancient house with becoming dignity, and keeping alive the generous spirit of hospitality which once distinguished it, and made the wayfaring and indigent rejoice whenever they approached its towers? Or where, if he merely consulted the gratification of his senses, could he behold a place more calculated to delight and please them?"

The family of Mr. Greville consisted of a wife and four children, a young man who had been consigned to his care till he became of age, and a young girl who had been brought up by him and his wife, as their daughter.

There was a mystery attached to the birth of this girl, which Mr. Greville would not even explain to his wife; and in consequence of his profound secrecy on the subject, nothing could have induced Mrs. Greville to take her under her protection, but the advantages with which the measure was attended to herself.

Neither she nor Mr. Greville were by any means in affluence at the time of their union; and some circumstances took place soon after that event, which considerably augmented their pecuniary distresses. They were, in short, in the most deplorable and melancholy situation, without a hope or prospect of relief, when Mr. Greville appeared before his wife one morning with a cheerful countenance, and told her Providence had at length given them an opportunity of retrieving their affairs. Mrs. Greville joyfully started at this intelligence, and eagerly begged an explanation, which he gave her to the following effect:

## NOCTURNAL VISIT.

A particular friend, he said, well acquainted with his misfortunes, had found means of informing him, that if he chose to accept the entire guardianship of a female infant, who could never, from some circumstances of a peculiarly delicate and distressing nature, be acknowledged, or publicly protected by those to whom she belonged, he should receive with her one thousand guineas, provided he bound himself, in a solemn manner, to bring her up as his own child, faithfully preserve the secret of her birth, and rest satisfied with the sum received with her, which was all he must ever expect on her account.

"I would not," continued Mr. Greville, "return any answer to this proposal till I had consulted you; should you accede to it, comfort and happiness may, I think, again be our's; but should you object to it, be assured I shall not murmur."

To do this, however, was not by any means the intention of Mrs. Greville; there were few things, indeed, to which she would not have agreed, in order to extricate herself from her present embarrassments. She accordingly consented to take the little offspring of sorrow and imprudence to her arms, hinting, however, at the same time, that she did not suppose her husband meant to include her in the number of those from whom he was bound to preserve the secret-entrusted to him.

On this point he instantly undeceived her, declaring, in the promise expected from him, no exception would be allowed; and that, as all inquiries relative to the parentage of the infant would be fruitless, he trusted she would neither tease herself nor him by making any, once more assuring her, if she did not thoroughly approve of coming the guardian of the child, he out hesitation refuse being so.

Mrs. Greville eagerly repeated her consent, hoping and believing she should at length win upon the confidence of her husband, and obtain the information she so ardently wished for ; not so much from curiosity, as from some secret suspicions she entertained.

The child, who then appeared about a twelve-month old, and was as beautiful as a cherub, was brought to her one night by her husband, and with her the sum which had been promised.

Freed from the load which had so long oppressed them, Mr. Greville was enabled to make such exertions, as soon procured him the curacy of Wye-field, whither he directly repaired, and his little family, with feelings similar to those which the fatigued and weather-beaten sailor must experience, who, after a dangerous and tempestuous voyage, finds himself at length in a haven of security and rest.

In this peaceful retirement, he became the delighted father of four lovely children, a girl and three boys, between whom and the little foundling (whatever his secret feelings might have been), he made no distinction.

But not all the happiness she enjoyed through means of the little Jacintha, her infantine endearments, or affectionate manners, could attach the unfeeling heart of Mrs. Greville to her. The suspicions she entertained concerning her birth, which the obstinate silence of Mr. Greville respecting it tended to strengthen, together with the jealousy his fondness for the child inspired, and the envy she felt at her expanding charms, which threatened, at a very early period, totally to eclipse those of her own daughter, made her hate her with the most inveterate rancour.

She was mistress of too much art, however, not to be able to conceal this hatred from her husband, before whom she generally assumed a smiling and tender aspect to Jacintha, which completely deceived him, and made him readily believe, whenever he heard of her being treated with harshness, that she deserved it.

Unchecked, therefore, in her cruelty, Mrs. Greville took every opportunity of mortifying her, as often as she possibly could, without exciting a suspicion of her own malevolent disposition. She debarred her of the amusements and enjoyments adapted to her age; she made her almost a household slave; and insinuated to her inmates that she was a girl of a most froward and unruly temper; thus endeavouring to excite a prejudice against her which might counteract the effects of her dreaded beauty.

Jacintha had a proud spirit and a feeling heart, and not only lamented, but murmured at the inhuman and unmerited conduct of her mother. She was too noble-minded, however, to prefer any complaint to her father, though she had reason to imagine, from his uniform tenderness towards her (a tenderness which she amply returned), that he would take her part.

She was happily of a cheerful disposition; her regrets, therefore, though deep, were not permanent; and her face, like an April morning, was one hour bedewed with tears, and the next irradiated with the sunshine of good humour. In consequence of this disposition, she grew up, notwithstanding the severity of her fate, with all that sweetness of temper, and loveliness of person, of which she gave so early a promise. Her's was

....." The faultless form,  
 " Shap'd by the hand of harmony; the cheek,

" Where the live crimson, through the native white .  
" Soft shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,  
" And every nameless grace ; the parted lip,  
" Like the red rose-bud moist with morning dew,  
" Breathing delight ; and under.....  
" .....sunny ringlets.....  
" The neck slight shaded, and the swelling breast,  
" The look resistless, piercing to the soul,  
" And by the soul inform'd."

The continued, or rather increased severity of her mother, which she had hoped, by uniform respect and uncomplaining submission, to subdue, or at least soften, at length began to exhaust her patience, and undermine her repose ; and, in all probability the wishes of Mrs. Greville would have been accomplished, which were to drive her to some act of desperation, but for the interposition of some unexpected circumstances, which changed the colour of her fate, and gave a value to her existence she had never before attached to it.

---

---

CHAP. II.

---

---

“ His kindly acts bespoke him well,  
“ To please the gentle maid :  
“ Who in a virgin's soul-fraught sigh,  
“ His manly warmth repaid.”

---

---

IT was the custom of Jacintha and Gertrude to pass a month every christmas at the house of a gentleman, some miles on the other side of Chester. He had formerly been an inhabitant of Wyefield ; and his daughters, the companions of their early youth, made it a point, on quitting the hamlet, that they should be indulged with an annual visit from their young friends at that season ....a season so particularly devoted, in the country, to pleasure and festivity.

Accordingly at the appointed time, the travelling chaise of Mr. Frankland regularly came for the two girls, who always set out upon their little journey with eager delight and expectation.

From this pleasurable excursion Mrs. Greville would willingly have kept Jacintha, could she have done so without betraying her malevolent motives for such a measure ; but as that was impossible, she was, of necessity, compelled to submit to it.

Among the guests who were assembled one christmas at Mr. Frankland's, was the honourable



Mr. Oswald, a young man of high fashion, and eminently gifted by nature, both in person and understanding; and who, to intelligence, animation, and elegance, united the most captivating manners and insinuating address.

He soon distinguished Jacintha by the particularity of his attentions....attentions not a little gratifying to her pride, and highly mortifying to Gertrude, who did every thing in her power, though without effect, to deprive her of them.

Gertrude, at this period, was about sixteen (a year younger than Jacintha), and, like her mother, was vain, ambitious, selfish, and designing. She was very pretty, perfectly conscious of the power of her charms, and could not bear to have their influence diminished by any rival beauty; she therefore detested Jacintha, by whose superior charms she had often been deprived of that homage she deemed only due to her own, and readily concurred in any scheme which the malice of her mother could suggest to mortify or distress her. Her rage and envy at the notice Jacintha attracted from Oswald could with difficulty be confined to her bosom, and her letters to her mother were filled with complaints upon the subject.

She was not the only person to whom his attentions to Jacintha gave uneasiness, though from a very different cause. Mr. Frankland quickly observed them, and knew not whether to rejoice at or regret them, doubtful as he was whether a man of high birth and fortune would ever think seriously of a girl whose only dowry was innocence and beauty, and fearful that they might make such an impression upon her heart, as would prove highly detrimental to its peace, if the hopes they were calculated to inspire should be disappointed.

His perfect esteem for her father, made him truly solicitous for her welfare ; his present anxiety about her imbittered the happiness he would otherwise have experienced from beholding his family and friends rejoicing around him ; and he watched her and Oswald with a vigilance which neither amusement nor business could relax.

At length, perceiving the particularity of Oswald every day increase...a particularity which, it was but too visible, was highly pleasing to Jacintha, he determined to speak to him upon the subject, and if he found he really had no serious intentions concerning her, at once to terminate it. In consequence of this determination, he invited him to his library one morning, briefly explained his reasons for doing so, and intreated him, if his attentions to Miss Greville were merely dictated by common place gallantry, not to persevere in them, as her heart was too susceptible to be trifled with....“ You must be aware,” said he, in a good-humoured manner, “ that the impression a dashing young fellow like you is calculated to make upon an inexperienced country lass of seventeen, is not very likely to be erased ; I must, therefore, my dear young friend,” proceeded he, with a greater degree of gravity, “ request you to desist from any farther particularity to her, if mere amusement is your aim ; nay, I must do more... I must insist upon it. She has been consigned to my care by her father (a sacred trust), and on that account exclusive of any other consideration, I hold myself bound to watch over her, and prevent any conduct under my roof which has a tendency to injure her repose.”

Oswald, who had not heard him to an end without evincing the utmost impatience, and making

many efforts to interrupt him, now hastily exclaimed, he should consider himself unworthy of the name of man, if he was capable of trifling with sensibility, or gratifying his vanity at the expence of an innocent believing girl. In suspecting him of such inhuman, such despicable conduct, he protested Mr. Frankland had done him the greatest injustice. He declared his intentions, relative to Miss Greville were of the most serious, the most honourable nature; her artless manners, her bewitching beauty, her seeming unconsciousness of charms, which dazzled every beholder, had captivated him almost the first hour he became acquainted with her; and he protested he had only delayed informing her friends of the sentiments with which she had inspired him, till he had been more explicit with her concerning them.

Mr. Frankland begged him to consider, ere he went too far to recede with honour, whether he thought his mother would approve of his attachment, or give it that sanction, without which, he was convinced, Mr. Greville would never permit an union between him and his daughter.

Oswald, with all the impetuosity of youthful passion, eager to remove every obstacle to its happiness, assured him he had not a doubt of receiving her approbation to any measure calculated to promote his felicity.

Satisfied on this head, Mr. Frankland no longer opposed his attentions to Jacintha; on the contrary, he rejoiced at beholding them, feeling the purest satisfaction at her happy prospects, not only on her own account, but on account of her family, who, he hoped and believed, would be essentially benefitted by her union with a man so generous and noble as Oswald.

Oswald's explanation to Mr. Frankland, was followed by an open avowal of his passion to Jacintha, and an entreaty for permission to wait upon her father. This was a request which it did not require much eloquence to prevail upon her to grant. The impression which she had made upon Oswald, was not greater than that which he had made upon her heart; and, amidst her most sanguine hopes of happiness (those hopes so natural in the early season of youth, when all, like the luxuriance of summer, appears to the imagination bright and glowing), she had never formed an idea of such exquisite felicity as she now looked forward to enjoying in her union with him.

Oswald was obliged to attend his mother, lady Henry Oswald, immediately in London, for the purpose of escorting her ladyship down to Mr. Frankland's house, where she was expected to remain till she could provide herself with a suitable mansion in the neighbourhood, it being her intention to reside in future in this part of the country; his visit, therefore, to Wyefield, was necessarily deferred till his return from town; and, whenever it took place, Mr. Frankland promised to be his companion. He and Jacintha departed from the hospitable mansion of this good man, at the same hour, upon their respective routes.

Jacintha was deputed by Mr. Frankland to be the herald of her own good fortune at home; but the particulars she meant to communicate, were anticipated by Gertrude, who, in her narrative to her mother, could not conceal the bitter regret she felt at the prospect of Jacintha's happiness... a regret which had poisoned every pleasure at Mr. Frankland's, and made her long to return

home, in order to vent the overflowings of her malignant and envious heart.

The rage and mortification of Mrs. Greville at hearing of Jacintha's conquest, were too violent for description. She execrated her own folly for ever having permitted her to quit Wyefield, and unable to support the idea of her being so greatly elevated above Gertrude, resolved to leave no means untried to ruin her hopes, and destroy her expected happiness, even though at the risk of censure and disgrace to herself.

Notwithstanding the superior affection she felt for her father, Jacintha thought she could be more unreserved in her communications to her mother, concerning Oswald, than to him. Mrs. Greville could not resist the opportunity, which her speaking on the subject gave, of gratifying, in some degree, her malice. She treated all she said with contempt and ridicule, affected to doubt the truth of every assertion, protested she was sure her vanity had utterly misled her, and, concluded by laughing aloud in the most sarcastic manner, at the idea, as she said, of the amusement it must afford Mr. Oswald, if he ever understood she had been so ridiculous as to believe him serious in the attentions he paid her.

Jacintha was stung to the soul by this contemptuous treatment; the glow of indignant pride mantled her cheeks, and she hastily quitted the room in order to conceal her tears, and avoid using any expression which might be displeasing to her mother. From this moment she resolved not to speak to any one of the family concerning Oswald; she now regretted Mr. Frankland's silence relative to him, but soon lost that regret in anticipating the triumph she should have, upon his arrival, over malice and ill-nature.

To that arrival she looked forward with mingled joy and exultation, counting, with the most restless impatience, the intervening days. From her father's total silence about him, it was evident to her that her mother had either not mentioned him at all, or in such a manner as made him appear a mere trifle. In this latter supposition she was not wrong. Mrs. Greville had indeed mentioned him to her husband, but in such a way, as led him to believe he was more gallant than sincere, and Jacintha one of the vainest and most credulous girls in the world, for having attended to his professions.

Had she not dreaded an explanatory letter from Frankland, which might lead to a discovery of her keeping the affair a secret from her husband, and consequently excite unpleasant suspicions, Mrs. Greville would have been silent respecting him; as on his ignorance of Oswald's intentions, principally depended the hopes she entertained of being able, through her machinations, to defeat those intentions.

Ere we proceed farther in our story, it may be necessary to introduce Oswald more particularly to the notice of our readers, than we have yet done; this we shall accordingly do in the following chapter.

## CHAP. III.

“ With such unshaken temper of the soul,  
“ To bear the swelling tide of prosp'rous fortune,  
“ Is to deserve that fortune. In adversity  
“ The mind grows tough by buffeting the tempest ;  
“ But in success dissolving, sinks to ease,  
“ And loses all her firmness.”

EGBERT OSWALD, the professed admirer of Jacintha, was the son of love and sorrow. At a very early period, his father, the second son of the marquis of Methwold, embraced a military life, and, through the interest and opulence of his family, soon rose high in his profession. In the course of time he was quartered with his regiment at a fort in Scotland, commanded by an old and particular friend of the marquis.

Major Kirkaldy had passed the best part of his life in the service of his country ; but his good fortune bore no proportion to his merits : and, in all probability, he would have experienced the severest pressure of poverty, but for the interference of the marquis, whose generous exertions in his favour procured him the situation he now enjoyed.

Delighted at beholding so near a relation of his benefactor, he took every opportunity of evinc-

ing his gratitude to the father by his attention to the son; and lord Henry scarcely knew another home than his.

But for his frequent visits to the house of the governor, there was a stronger inducement than the kindness and hospitality of the old man. Major Kirkaldy had a daughter, young, innocent, and beautiful, whom lord Henry could not behold without emotion, or know without loving.

Nature had not been less liberal of her mental and personal gifts to him, than to the charming Rosaline; and they soon became mutually and passionately enamoured of each other. More incautious, perhaps, before others, than before her father, their attachment was pretty generally known ere he had an idea of it; but no sooner was he convinced of its existence, than he took lord Henry to task, and entreated him, in the most urgent manner, not to entail sorrow upon him and his child by persevering in his attentions to her, except he could prevail upon the marquis to sanction them, of which he had himself but little hopes, and without which he solemnly vowed never to permit a connexion between them.

Lord Henry was too noble, too ingenuous, to attempt to deceive him by saying he had any expectation of obtaining his father's consent to his union with Miss Kirkaldy; on the contrary, he confessed he was certain all application on the subject would be unavailing, as he well knew his father had already fixed upon an alliance for him, on which his heart was bent. "Through means of me or mine then," cried major Kirkaldy, "he shall not be disappointed. I will not, viper-like, sting the bosom which has fostered me, or return kindness with perfidy and ingratitude."



Lord Henry argued and intreated; he endeavoured to prevail on him to consent to his marriage with his daughter, by trying to convince him that, however displeased the marquis might be on first hearing of it, the uselessness of such displeasure would soon induce him to forego it.

His displeasure, however, was but a secondary consideration with Kirkaldy. He thought infinitely more of the dishonour and ingratitude with which he should be branded, if he encouraged clandestine proceedings, and consented to an action so contrary to the wishes of his patron. The eloquence of lord Henry was therefore ineffectual; and Kirkaldy at length silenced him, by declaring, that, dear as his daughter was to him, though all his hopes of happiness centered in her, he would rather see her dead, than allow her to act in any manner which could draw censure upon her and himself, and injure a character which, through all his misfortunes, it had been his study and pride to preserve unsullied. He moreover said, his lordship must, in future, be satisfied to be received merely as a common visiter at his house; and protested even those casual visits would be prohibited, if he ever discovered that he spoke to his daughter upon the forbidden subject.

To her he was not less explicit than he had been to her lover; and, with inexpressible anguish, he saw her distress fully equalled his. She did not, indeed, like the impetuous Henry, entreat or remonstrate; but her tears, her bitter tears, evinced her feelings, and affected the heart of her father more forcibly than any language could have done. Too late he regretted the error he had committed, in permitting an intimacy between two beings so formed to captivate each other by their congenial

loveliness ; and to this regret was united a degree of wonder at his not having before reflected upon the imprudence of such a measure.

To remove the unhappiness he had been so instrumental in creating, was now his most fervent wish ; for this purpose he watched over the lovers, and tried, by tenderness and reason, to reconcile them to the disappointment of their wishes. He scarcely felt more on his daughter's account than on lord Henry's, whose ingenuous manners had strongly attached him to his interests, and whose faded cheek, whose languid eye, whose altered mien too evidently denoted his wretchedness. He still continued to visit at the governor's, though not in the manner he had formerly done, nor was he ever admitted except other company was present ; but, notwithstanding all this caution, and the vigilant eye that was kept upon him, he contrived to address his Rosaline on the subject nearest his heart. This being discovered by her father, he was absolutely forbidden any farther visits. Still, however, he found means to see her ; those stolen interviews could not be long concealed from her father, and, finding all his efforts to prevent them ineffectual, he resolved on sending Rosaline away, and keeping her in the closest retirement, till change of quarters should oblige her lover to quit the fort. This was the only method he could devise to prevent a measure he dreaded, and suppress a flame which could only destroy the hearts that nourished it.

He accordingly sent Rosaline to a considerable distance from the fort, with a caution and secrecy which he trusted would baffle any search or inquiries that might be made after her. But what can escape the vigilance of love ? Lord Henry

soon discovered the place to which she was conveyed, and determined on pursuing her thither, and exerting all his eloquence to prevail on her to consent to a clandestine union. The impetuosity of his disposition would have made him follow her directly, but that he dreaded exciting suspicion by doing so, and thus defeating his intentions ; he therefore remained a fortnight in the fort, after her removal from it, at the expiration of which period, under the pretext of urgent business that required his immediate presence in London, he quitted it, having completely deceived Kirkaldy by his conduct, and accompanied by a brother officer, high in his esteem and confidence, proceeded in disguise to the retreat of Rosaline.

This was an ancient castle, built upon the edge of an extensive lake, environed with high and gloomy mountains, and belonging to an old female relation of Kirkaldy's, who, being of a most unhappy temper, readily undertook the charge of Rosaline, as it gave her an opportunity of seeing another as miserable as she felt herself. Lord Henry was greatly disappointed on reaching this abode, at the very little probability there appeared of having a speedy interview with his mistress.

Neither delays nor dangers, however, could discourage lord Henry. He took up his abode at the hut of a peasant, whom he bribed to secrecy concerning his guests, and, with his companion, continually hovered about the castle, frequently at night going upon the water, which, he understood from his host, the windows of Rosaline's chamber overlooked.

Rosaline, in the mean time, ignorant of the intentions of her lover, ignorant of his vicinity to her, and fearful that an eternal separation had

taken place between them, abandoned herself to the most exquisite sorrow...a sorrow which was not a little heightened by the malice of her cousin, who perpetually accused her of folly and indiscretion; and not only forbade her going beyond the precincts of the castle, but prevented her from reading, writing, or, in short, doing any thing which had a tendency to alleviate the wretchedness of her feelings.

She received a letter from her father, one day, couched in the most affectionate terms; but the pleasure his tenderness was calculated to give her, the intelligence he communicated, relative to lord Henry's departure for London, completely counteracted.

This journey appeared to her a tacit acknowledgment of his determination to forget her: and the hope that till then had secretly lurked within her breast, now became extinguished. The anguish she had with difficulty suppressed before her unfeeling relative, who, she knew, would triumph at beholding it, was freely indulged in the privacy of her chamber. Unable to sleep, on retiring to it for the night, she stationed herself at an open window, from whence she could observe the waves of the lake, now silvered by the beams of a full-orbed moon, rolling towards the rocky shore, against which they broke with a melancholy murmur, not undelightful to the pensive mind; whilst, with a sound not less dismal, the cold breeze, which lifted her long tresses from her breast, whistled through the dark heath of the surrounding mountains.

This wild and solemn scene was perfectly suited to the feelings of the unhappy Rosaline...“Here,”

cried she, " amidst this solitude, once so hateful to me, I could now wish forever to remain ; for the gaieties of life can retain no charms for a heart lacerated by sorrow and disappointment." Whilst thus indulging her melancholy, she suddenly heard the dashing of oars, and the next instant beheld a boat approaching the castle. She was somewhat surprised on observing the rowers pausing for some minutes, as if in consultation, and felt still more so at perceiving a man leap from the boat the moment it drew close to the shore, and hastily approach her window.

Rosaline involuntarily retreating, now recollected, for the first time, that her white dress rendered her a conspicuous object ; but she was soon recalled...recalled by the voice, the impassioned voice, of Henry. The raptures of that moment cannot be described ; she bent from the window, she breathed forth the tenderness of her heart in language scarcely less ardent than his own, and, gave him every assurance he could desire, of her love being unabated. These assurances, however, could not satisfy the enamoured Henry. He implored, he insisted upon her giving him a convincing proof of her regard, by putting herself immediately under his protection.

The inclination of Rosaline seconded the intreaties of lord Henry ; but she shrunk, trembling and affrighted, from the idea of disobeying her father, not but that she thought his notions of honour much too rigid. Lord Henry, finding she hesitated, and maddened at the thought of losing her, knelt down, and took a solemn oath to quit the regiment he then served in, and exchange into one which should be constantly upon foreign service, if she did not comply with his wishes.

Rosaline knew his disposition well. She knew that what he had so solemnly vowed, he would strictly perform; this threat, therefore, vanquished her resolution; for before the dread of being eternally separated from him, every other apprehension vanished. Lord Henry would not permit her to defer her elopement beyond the present moment. The window was too high to admit of escape through it; but though the doors of the castle were locked, the keys remained within them: in a few minutes therefore, she regained her liberty, and found herself within the arms of her lover. She was immediately conveyed to the cottage where he lodged, and the horses, on which he and his companion travelled thither, being directly prepared, they set off to an inn near the fort. To this the chaplain of the regiment received a private summons from lord Henry; and, as soon as the marriage ceremony was over, he waited upon Kirkaldy, by his lordship's desire, to acquaint him with the event which had taken place.

Kirkaldy received this intelligence with regret and indignation, and was deaf to every solicitation in behalf of his daughter. Rosaline was deeply affected by his resentment, notwithstanding lord Henry repeatedly assured her, he was convinced her father would not long remain inexorable. Happy would he have felt himself, could he have said the same of his own parent; but, alas! he had soon reason to fear all application to him for forgiveness would prove unsuccessful...a fear which time too fatally confirmed.

The marquis, though capable of generous, and even noble actions, was selfish and obdurate in the extreme. Whatever services, therefore, he rendered to others, he took care should be such a

could not interfere with his own interest, to which, at any time; he would unhesitatingly have sacrificed his dearest friends. His ambition was not inferior to his avarice, and his pride surpassed his obduracy; nor was there any thing short of a dishonourable action, which could prevent him from gratifying his ruling propensities. He was, besides, a man of the most implacable disposition; and of him, with truth, it might be said, as it was of the celebrated Sixtus, that he never forgave an injury, nor forgot an obligation. His eldest son, in conformity to his wishes, had formed an early alliance with a lady of high rank and considerable fortune, and he had long meditated a connexion equally splendid and advantageous for his second; great, therefore, was his disappointment, on hearing of Henry's imprudent marriage...a disappointment which some particular circumstances considerably heightened.

The young lady destined for the partner of lord Henry, had been left under the sole guardianship of the marquis by her father, with his express wishes to have her married into the family of his lordship. These wishes met the warm concurrence of the marquis, who only waited till she had attained a proper age, to settle all the preliminaries of her union with lord Henry, of whose ready acquiescence to such a measure he had not the smallest doubt.

In consequence of his confidence on this head, and knowing, as his son was wholly dependent on him, he could make what terms with him he pleased, he had not scrupled to make use of a large portion of his destined daughter-in-law's fortune, for the purpose of purchasing a fine estate in his neigh-

bourhood, belonging to a ruined family, by the possession of which his influence would be greatly increased in the county. The marriage of lord Henry compelled him to the disagreeable necessity of parting with this highly-valued acquisition, in order to reimburse his ward. His regret, vexation and rage, at being compelled to do so, were too violent for description ; in the bitterness of his soul, he renounced lord Henry, and imprecated the heaviest curses upon his own head if ever he forgave him. Not satisfied with wreaking his vengeance upon his son, by withdrawing the income he had allowed him from his entrance into life, he resolved on punishing, to the utmost of his power, the unhappy Kirkaldy, whom he considered the treacherous abettor of his son's disobedience. To do this he accordingly set his wits to work, and soon succeeded in getting him deprived of his command, which deprivation left him utterly destitute of provision.

The ruin which she had drawn upon the grey-head of her father, overwhelmed lady Henry with all the horrors of despair, and her life was endangered by her anguish. Solicitations were now unnecessary to obtain the forgiveness of her father...he knew the disposition of his child too well, not to conceive the wretchedness she must feel at the idea of having injured him ; he, therefore, hastened to her, to comfort, to revive her, to assure her, as he folded her to his forgiving heart, his sufferings would be cheerfully borne, if he might hope to see her yet in the possession of the happiness she merited.

Young, inexperienced, and therefore sanguine, lord Henry flattered himself he should be able,



through the interest of his friends, to procure Kirkaldy a situation equal to that which he had lost through his means. But, alas! he soon found his expectations were fallacious, soon discovered that the discarded son of the marquis of Methwold was a very different being in the estimation of the world, from him who had been his avowed favourite. All he could therefore do, was to allow him a stipend from his pay, on which the old man retired to a remote farm-house, with content in his countenance, but anguish in his heart...anguish not inspired by his own misfortunes, but those he saw impending over the beings he most loved.

In less than a year after his marriage lord Henry's regiment was ordered to America, where the flames of war then raged with violence. Thither he and his wife accompanied it, and there he experienced many hardships besides those attached to his profession, and had the misery of burying several lovely children. Egbert, of a numerous offspring, alone survived, and from this circumstance, was, perhaps, doubly endeared to his parents. At length, an unfortunate wound compelled lord Henry to abandon a military life; and, having retired on half pay, he returned to his native country, considerably injured in his health.

Kirkaldy immediately repaired to his unhappy children, determined, let "weal or woe betide," never more to leave them. The heavy expences which attended the re-establishment of lord Henry's health, involved him so deeply in debt, that, in order to avoid a prison, he was reduced to the sad alternative of disposing of his half pay. "Want, wordly want," now menaced the wretched couple with all its horrors; nor did they see any means of avoiding the "meagre fiend," lord Henry's

renewed applications to his father and brother having proved as fruitless as his former ones; when Providence, that ever-wakeful eye, which looks with pity on the feeble toil of mortals lost to hope, relieved their distress.

As lord Henry was walking, in a melancholy manner, one day through the park, ruminating on his deplorable situation, he was suddenly accosted by a gentleman who had been a school-fellow, and a favourite companion of his in the early part of his life, and who, at the time he was soliciting his supposed friends in behalf of Kirkaldy, was absent in a diplomatic capacity. He was a man of the most amiable disposition, and strongly attached to lord Henry. The delight expressed at their unexpected meeting, and the delicate inquiries he made into his situation, soon drew from the o'erfraught heart of his unfortunate friend, a full disclosure of his griefs. His looks more than his words evinced his sympathy, for real sensibility is never verbose or ostentatious: but in a few days he gave a convincing proof of the interest and compassion the narrative had excited, by getting lord Henry appointed to a very beneficial employment under government, and in the office over which he himself presided.

Fortune now seemed inclined to recompense lord Henry and his family for all her former unkindness to them; and to crown his happiness, his son grew up in mind, person, and manners, all that his fondest wishes could desire. Lord Henry, who, to the knowledge of the scholar, united the elegance of the courtier, superintended his education himself, and gave to it that complete finishing which common tuition effect.

All uneasiness, relative to the future destiny of this beloved son, was done away by his generous friend, who, unasked, gave a positive assurance of providing for him in the civil line. This destination was highly gratifying to the tenderness of Egbert's family, who could ill have borne the idea of a separation from him: but how uncertain is human happiness! In the midst of his felicity, the noble patron, the disinterested friend of lord Henry, was snatched from the world, leaving unfulfilled his intentions in favour of Egbert. Ere lord Henry or his family had in any degree recovered from the shock occasioned by his sudden death, a message came to inform him his services were no longer required by government. This unexpected dismissal from an office which he had filled with such honour to himself, and benefit to others, lord Henry could only impute to the inveterate rancour of the marquis, whose malevolence, he had reason to believe, time had rather increased than diminished, and whom he knew to be intimately acquainted with the successor of his lamented friend. Beneath this stroke....a stroke which levelled all his hopes and expectations in the dust, his spirits utterly failed; a deep and corrosive melancholy fastened upon his soul....that silent, that affecting melancholy, which, instead of venting itself in sighs or exclamations, "whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break."

The endearments of his wife and son, far from allaying, rather added to his misery, as every proof of their love heightened his affection for them, and rendered more poignant his regret at being unable to administer to their comforts.... Egbert, at this unhappy period, was in his twentieth year,

.....“ Of fresh and stainless youth ;  
 “ In voices well divulg'd ; free, learn'd and valiant ;  
 “ And in dimension, and the shape of nature,  
 “ A gracious person.”

Though lord Henry could not shake off the gloom which oppressed him, he made every exertion in his power to procure a provision for his family ; but, alas ! all his applications were ineffectual, though made where he had every reason to hope they would prove successful....to those whom, in the zenith of his prosperity, he had served....to those whom he had lifted from indigence and obscurity, into ease and affluence.

Those early instances of perfidy and ingratitude, gave Egbert (whose notions of friendship and honour were enthusiastic) a disgust to the world, which he could not overcome, without the greatest difficulty ; and increased the predilection he had always felt for a country life. Like the poet, he thought....

“ Oh ! knew he but his happiness....of men  
 “ The happiest he, who far from public rage,  
 “ .....With a choice few retir'd,  
 “ Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life.”

Some pretended friends, more cruel than others (for to keep alive expectations which we never mean to realize, is of all cruelties the most atrocious), deluded lord Henry with false hopes ; and in attending upon them, the sum he had saved while in office, dwindled away almost unperceived.

Debts were then unavoidably contracted, and a prison at last became his home !

Despair now took entire possession of him, and he rapidly approached that goal, which was to terminate his misfortunes. The anguish of lady

Henry at this period, was too great for description. The misery of losing the man she adored ....a misery of itself sufficient to overwhelm her, was heightened by her inability of procuring him the necessaries he required. She shrunk with horror from his ghastly looks, and with difficulty could prevent the wild screams of sorrow and despair from bursting from her heart.

Egbert struggled with his feelings, in order to support her, and sooth the last moments of his father. These moments were spent in fervent prayer for the welfare of his family; and with the sigh which released his suffering spirit, he feebly articulated a blessing on them. "My dear child," cried the venerable Kirkaldy, to his daughter, when all was over, "let the idea of the happy exchange he has made, reconcile you to his loss. Think of the happiness he now enjoys in the mansions of heaven....in the bosom of his God; and cease to regret his release from want, pain, and confinement."

The unhappy Rosaline was conveyed from the prison, to lodgings almost as wretched as her destiny. As soon as the first transports of grief were over, she recalled her scattered thoughts; and, reflecting on the duty she owed her son, resolved once more to try and soften the heart of the marquis, to whom she had written several times, though without effect, during the fatal illness of her husband.

She accordingly wrote a most affecting letter, describing the sufferings of the unfortunate lord Henry, and the deplorable situation of herself and son; and concluded, by entreating him, in the most energetic manner, to extend the hand of pity and compassion to them in this their deep

distress, and suffer the death of her lamented husband to expiate the offence which had provoked his resentment.

In due time she received an answer, which she opened with mingled emotions of hope and fear. But, alas ! how soon did every pleasing idea vanish before its contents, which briefly stated, that whatever the sufferings of lord Henry had been, he had richly deserved them. This consideration therefore precluded the commiseration which a reflection upon them might otherwise have excited. All solicitations on her own behalf, she was positively assured, would forever prove unavailing, as he (the marquis) had solemnly determined never to relieve the being, to whose artifices he imputed the destruction of a son, who never in the slightest instance had infringed the duty and respect he owed him, till his unfortunate acquaintance with her commenced.

But, as he thought it a pity the innocent should suffer for the guilty, he consented to take her son under his protection, provided he bound himself in a solemn manner never more to have any intercourse with her: but except he agreed to this measure...except they both subscribed to the articles of an eternal separation, and rigidly observed them, he declared his unalterable resolution never to notice or befriend him. He desired them both, but especially lady Henry, to deliberate ere an answer was returned to his letter, as by that answer his future conduct towards her son would be irrevocably determined.

"Oh monster of barbarity!" cried the agonized Rosaline, as she dropped the letter from her trembling hands, "will nothing appease thy unrelenting vengeance, but my draining the cup of sorrow to the very dregs?"....Her soul recoiled from

the idea of parting with Egbert, her joy, her hope, her comfort: but when she reflected on the misery, the obscurity she would doom him to, by retaining him, she resolved, like the scriptural mother, to resign her child, rather than devote him to destruction.

When the letter of the marquis, and the determination of his mother, were made known to Egbert, grief, indignation and surprise; for a minute suspended his faculties; then suddenly falling on his knees, he grasped the hands of lady Henry with vehemence, and with uplifted eyes, called upon God to renounce him, if ever he deserted her.

Kirkaldy, in a transport of joy, embraced him, rapturously exclaiming....“ I knew, I knew how my boy would act! ” while his mother, falling upon his bosom, wept aloud, and with her tears mingled prayers to heaven for his preservation. Egbert insisted upon answering the marquis himself, which he did to the following effect:

#### TO THE MARQUIS OF METHWOLD.

“ MY LORD,

“ It does not require the least deliberation to answer your letter. The feelings of nature prompt an immediate reply, and urge me to tell you that your protection, on the terms it is offered, I utterly reject.

“ Could I accept it upon such terms, I should be unworthy of a much higher protection than your's ....the protection of a just and merciful God, who punishes, not rewards, the violation of duty. To him, to that gracious Being,

“ Who doth the ravens feed,

“ Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,”

I commit my cause, not doubting his especial care.  
“ Rest satisfied, my lord, with an assurance of never more being troubled with solicitations on my account.

“ The spirit of my father, which, I think,  
“ Is within me,”

prompts me to exertion, not intreaty; it points out the road of virtue and honour as the only road to happiness, and makes me think lightly of any toil which can conduce to the ease of a parent, whose virtues render me proud, and give me a passport to the favour and countenance of the world.

“ EGBERT OSWALD.”

All hope of succour from the marquis being at an end, and extreme distress urging an immediate exertion, Egbert sallied forth one morning to the house of a merchant, whom his father had essentially served; and who, though he had never in any degree returned the obligations conferred upon him by lord Henry, had never wholly declared a disinclination to do so.

Egbert now resolved to put his sincerity to the test: he was received in a manner which gave rise to the most flattering expectations. But scarcely had he entered upon the purport of his visit, when the merchant interrupted him to say he had for several days been making a strict inquiry after him, as he had something of importance to communicate. He then briefly informed him, that by the last packet from Jamaica, he had received an account of the death of colonel Moreland, together with his will, to which he himself was appointed sole executor, and by which Egbert became entitled to the sum of ten thousand pounds; two to be paid immediately



from a deposit in one of the English banks, and the remainder as soon as the colonel's affairs were finally settled in Jamaica.

This gentleman, from whom Egbert received so unexpected a bequest, was the identical officer who had assisted lord Henry in carrying off Rosaline. In the course of time he accompanied his regiment to the West-Indies, where he soon formed a matrimonial connexion with the widow of a rich planter. Upon her demise, which was not till many years after their marriage, he was preparing to return to England, when an illness seized him, which the physicians at once pronounced mortal.

He gave up, therefore, all hopes of ever revisiting his native country, and immediately set about arranging his worldly affairs.

The merchant whom he had appointed his executor, was the person who transacted all his affairs in England, and to whose care his letters to lord Henry, with whom he kept up a constant correspondence, were consigned....letters expressive of the warmest friendship, and strongest anxiety about Egbert, his godson and namesake.

Not so much on his own account, as on his mother's and her venerable father, did Oswald rejoice at this sudden reverse of fortune.

The feelings of lady Henry on hearing it, can better be conceived than described; yet, amidst the happiness it imparted, a sudden pang of sorrow seized her heart at the idea of its coming too late to be shared by her husband. She soon, however, recollected herself, and, checking the tears of useless regret, bent with gratitude and resignation to the will of Heaven.

It was her ardent wish to quit London immediately.... the scene of her most exquisite miseries, and

which continually revived the keen remembrance of them.

The merchant, who was now become her zealous friend, no sooner learned this wish, and that she preferred a residence in one of the remote counties, to any bordering upon the metropolis, than he proposed giving Egbert an introductory letter to his brother-in-law, Mr. Frankland, who lived in Cheshire, and in whose neighbourhood, he understood, there were some pleasant dwellings to be let. This proposal was accordingly accepted, and he arrived about the commencement of christmas at Mr. Frankland's, who received him with the utmost courtesy and politeness.

The pleasures of his hospitable mansion did not render Oswald forgetful of the purpose for which he had visited the country; but he remained so undecided in his choice of a habitation, that he at length determined to leave the decision to lady Henry. This determination being declared to Mr. Frankland, he invited her and the major to his house in the most pressing manner; and Oswald, as has been already mentioned, went up to London to attend them in their journey from that capital.

Lady Henry was neither selfish nor aspiring; she had suffered, indeed, too severely, from the passions of avarice and ambition in the bosom of another, to give any encouragement to them in her own, and had consequently no objection to her son's union with Jacintha, but that which arose from the extreme youth of both parties; this, however, he contrived to over-rule, and it was agreed his happiness should not be deferred.

On arriving at Mr. Frankland's, they found him confined to his bed by the gout. Oswald, too impatient to wait for his recovery, set out for Wye-

field with his servant. He stopped at the inn, from whence he wrote a short letter to Jacintha, acquainting her with his arrival, and begging her to fix an hour for his waiting upon her father.... Mrs. Greville and Gertrude were both upon the watch; the latter received the letter from his servant, whom she immediately dispatched, in order to prevent his being seen by any of the rest of the family, with a verbal message, importing, that a written answer would be sent after him. She and her mother then retired to a chamber, where, locking themselves in, they contrived, according to a previously concerted plan, the following letter.

“ TO THE HON. EGBERT OSWALD.

“ SIR,

“ Trifling as this letter may make me appear in your eyes, I prefer the imputation of lightness or inconstancy, to the still more shocking imputation of perfidy or ingratitude.

“ In short, sir, to be explicit, I must inform you, that I deceived both you and myself, when I imagined I returned your passion; time and reflection have since convinced me, I never did....never can make such a return to it, as it merits.

“ Regard, therefore, for your own happiness (for surely, very little, if indeed any, can be expected in a married state, without mutual affection and good-will), will, I doubt not, induce you to exonerate me from every promise I made you.

“ But, from your generosity, I expect even more than this....I expect you will keep the con-

tents of this letter, and your visit to Wyefield, a profound secret. Were either known, I should be overwhelmed with the resentment and reproaches of my friends, whose anxiety to see me advantageously settled, would never permit them to pardon my rejection of proposals, so infinitely superior to any they had a right to expect for me.

"When you reflect upon the candour with which I have dealt towards you, I am sure you will allow I have some right to expect your compliance with my wishes in this respect.

"How many of my sex, situated as I am, would have yielded to the allurements of your wealth, and without even feeling for you those sentiments of esteem, which I must forever entertain, have accepted your hand, and thus entailed upon you the exquisite misery a mind of sensibility must ever experience, in an union where love is not reciprocal!

"But I scorn duplicity, and have solemnly determined, never to give my hand, unaccompanied by my heart. Could the impulses of that heart be regulated by the judgment, be assured, you would have received a very different letter from me; but, alas! inclination, like imagination, is uncontrollable.

"I cannot conclude, without entreating you to make Mr. Frankland (to whom, upon consideration, I cannot object to your shewing this letter) promise not to mention to my parents any thing relative to the sentiments with which you honoured me, or the intentions which you formed in consequence of those sentiments; as his dropping a hint upon the subject, would involve me in the greatest wretchedness.

lemnly vowed to make every effort in his power to drive her from his remembrance; and as a proof of his sincerity, snatched up her torn and trampled letter, and thrust it into the fire.

He now, for the first time, thought of the strange remarks which might and would, in all probability, be made, when the settings of the lockets were found. No sooner did this idea occur than he resolved to regain them; and for this purpose had nearly raked the whole fire out, when the landlord entered to lay the cloth for dinner (which Oswald had ordered, on receiving no immediate invitation to Mr. Greville's). In utter amazement and dismay at the strange employment, and disordered looks of his guest, the landlord retreated instead of advancing, staring wildly all the time.

Oswald blushed excessively at being discovered in such a situation; and covering his face with his handkerchief, said, in a voice scarcely articulate, he had dropped something into the fire. The landlord upon this ventured to come forward and offered his services; but as quickly retreated, on Oswald's again seizing the poker, which, like himself, was a little heated by the exercise it had undergone; and descending to the kitchen, inquired from the groom whether his master was a gentleman in his right wits? This interrogation being answered to his satisfaction, he once more ascended the stairs. By this time Oswald had recovered the settings, and flung them into a pond beneath the window of the apartment he occupied. Dinner was served without his touching it; and the landlord, from this circumstance, and his taking a wild and solitary path across the fields at the back of the inn, in preference to the high road, began again to be a little doubtful about him.

Frankland was not more astonished than irritated on hearing of the conduct of Jacintha. It was some minutes ere he could give credit to it; and the invectives which Oswald uttered against her, in the first paroxysm of rage and disappointment, were not more violent than his. He cursed her for a jilt; swore she deserved to be held up to public scorn and contempt; prayed fervently she might never be married, except it was to age, decrepitude, and ill-nature; and concluded by protesting he would let her father know how she had acted, that she might in some degree be punished. Here Egbert interposed, and prevailed, though not without difficulty, on the old gentleman to drop this resolution.

Oswald could not disclose the conduct of Jacintha to his mother without the utmost pain and reluctance. He had represented her as not more amiable than tender, nor less warmly attached to him than he was to her; and now to retract this assertion, to acknowledge he was either deceived himself, or had attempted to deceive others, was a humiliation he could scarcely support.

The indignation and resentment which lady Henry felt, on hearing of Jacintha's rejection, exceeded even her surprise, as she could not help believing it was occasioned by a superior offer. A short time, however, served to convince her this opinion was erroneous; and she then began to think of her in a more favourable light.

While Oswald was relating the conduct of Jacintha to his mother, his pride impelled him to assume an air of composure: but, notwithstanding this appearance of serenity, she had sufficient penetration to perceive he was deeply affected by it; and that it would require time, as well as the efforts

of reason, to heal the wounds which his disappointment relative to her had inflicted. She pretended, however, to believe the contrary, and that it would be an easy matter to conquer an attachment which was hopeless: thus stimulating him to the exertions she deemed necessary, by declaring her conviction of his being equal to them.

Happily for Oswald, Mr. Frankland had not mentioned his proposal to Jacintha to any one of his family: it being a maxim with him never to speak on such matters till they came to a final issue. No ridicule or ill-natured remarks upon his unexpected disappointment, were, therefore, to be dreaded.

While he was making every effort to forget Jacintha, she was dwelling upon his idea, recalling every word which had passed between them, and counting, with restless anxiety, the minutes which were to bring him to her.

When three months elapsed, without either seeing him or hearing any tidings of him, she began to grow uneasy: but when another fortnight wore away, without bringing any intelligence of him, her disquietude became almost intolerable; aggravated as it was by the malice of her mother and Gertrude, who took occasion, from time to time, to comment upon the errors and mistakes into which vanity and self-conceit are apt to lead one.

To terminate her suspence concerning Oswald, Jacintha would have written to one of the Franklands, could she have sent or received a letter without the knowledge of her mother; but as that was impossible, she was compelled to remain in ignorance of the cause which made him procrastinate his visit.

She was sitting at work one morning with Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, when one of the boys came running in with a letter for her. The moment she cast her eyes upon it, she saw it came from Miss Frankland, and instantly became agitated; scarcely knowing what she did, but unwilling to betray the emotions it might excite, she started up, and was hastily quitting the room, when the stern voice of her mother obliged her to resume her seat.

Still, however, she hesitated to open the letter, which Mrs. Greville perceiving, told her, if she did not choose to take that trouble, she would herself do so, pretending to be anxious to know how the Franklands were. Jacintha accordingly broke the seal with a trembling hand; and, with a throbbing heart, read to herself the following lines.

“ DEAR JACINTHA,

“ ’Tis really quite provoking that your visits to our house are limited to so short a period as a month; had you staid a little longer, you would have been quite delighted with the agreeable addition which was made to our domestic circle. Lady Oswald arrived exactly ten days after your departure, she is a charming woman, notwithstanding the deep impression which sorrow has made upon her mind as well as countenance. But I need not descant upon her praise, as I fancy you have already heard her panegyric from lips very eloquent upon the subject, and, if I do not mistake, upon many other subjects also.

“ But I cannot say too much about the two Miss Merediths; they come from North-Wales, and are young, lovely, accomplished, and lively.



I assure you, Mr. Oswald does ample justice to their charms, particularly to those of the eldest, who is quite the object of his idolatry. I attacked him about this the other day, and asked him, how he could so soon forget my little village friend? I assure you he appeared greatly confused by my question, and blushed to the very eyes; but soon recovering from his embarrassment, he said, in that soft and insinuating manner, which he knows so well how to assume; there were some remembrances too dangerous to peace to be encouraged.

“In short, like too many of his sex, I fancy novelty has resistless charms for him: but enough of a person whom I have no reason to imagine my friend thinks of, but as an agreeable man;.... were the case otherwise, I flatter myself she would not have concealed the secret from me.

“I should have written sooner, but for the continual hurry and bustle in which I have been kept, ever since your departure; you will, therefore, I hope and believe, excuse a silence, which did not proceed from any diminution of regard or friendship: and as a proof of your doing so, answer this letter directly, as we are all anxious to hear how our friends at Wyefield are. We beg them to accept our united regards, and best wishes for their health and happiness: and believe me, dear Jacintha, ever your’s,

“Feb. ....

“A. FRANKLAND.”

The shock this letter gave Jacintha, was too great to be expressed; but the feelings it excited, she endeavoured to stifle, in order to avoid the ill-natured sarcasms she knew they would give

rise to. Assuming, therefore, an air of composure, she put the fatal letter, which had annihilated every flattering hope and expectation, into her pocket, without speaking, and took up her work, though her hands trembled so she could scarcely hold it.

"Well, miss," said Mrs. Greville, after enjoying her too evident distress and emotion, for some minutes, in silence; "since you are not obliging enough to let me know how Mr. Frankland's family are, I desire you may give me that letter to read."

"All the family are well, madam," replied Jacintha, determined, if possible, not to let her see the letter.

Mrs. Greville, however, was resolved to have it; and accordingly desired, or rather commanded her to give it that instant, in a tone which enforced immediate obedience.

Most reluctantly, therefore, Jacintha presented it to her; but in the very act of doing so, her feelings overcame her; and bursting into an agony of tears, she fell back upon her chair, unable to move.

Gertrude, as regardless of her distress as Mrs. Greville, jumped from her chair with eager curiosity; and leaning over her mother's shoulder, perused the letter, which imparted to both their hearts the most malignant satisfaction, by convincing them their perfidious scheme had succeeded according to their wishes; and though Oswald's admiration of Miss Meredith seemed rather inimical to their own designs upon him, their disappointment on that head was entirely

overlooked, in the joy they felt at the disappointment of Jacintha.

"You see, Miss," cried Mrs. Greville, her eyes sparkling with pleasure, "the consequences of vanity; if you had not indulged your's, and given way to idle expectations, you never would have felt your present pain; but you are rightly punished, not only for your vanity, but your obstinacy in not believing what I said. I knew too much of the world, to think Mr. Oswald would ever bestow a serious thought upon such a girl as you."

"Aye, so I imagined too," exclaimed Gertrude; "I saw all along, she thought too highly of the power of her charms."

"Oh, Gertrude!" said Jacintha, "how can you speak in such a manner? How can you, who witnessed the particularity of his attentions to me, insinuate that it was only my vanity led me to imagine him sincere?"

"I really did not perceive any great particularity in his attention to you," replied Gertrude, with a toss of her head; "and since we are upon the subject, I must tell you, Jacintha, that I am sure he never would have paid you even half the attention he did, had you not compelled him to do so, by continually throwing yourself in his way, and trying to engross him from all the rest of the girls."

"I see," cried Jacintha, "I am not happier in the affections of my sister, than of my mother."

"No reflections upon either, Miss, I desire," cried Mrs. Greville, in an imperious tone; "you are treated much better by both than you deserve to be."

"I am happy I can't agree with you in thinking so, madam," replied Jacintha, whose spirit was roused by this cruelty: "for if I estimated my own worth according to your tenderness and Gertrude's, I should have a very indifferent opinion of it indeed."

"No more insolence, I desire, Miss," cried Mrs. Greville; "I shan't suffer any impertinent observations or complaints, I assure you."

"You need not fear any complaints from me, madam," said Jacintha; "I have acquired sufficient philosophy not to complain of evils I cannot remedy."

"Let me hear no more of your philosophy, nor let me see any more crying. Go on with your work; and don't imagine your sister and I will make ourselves slaves, in order to permit you to wail about the house, like a tragedy queen, for the desertion of your supposed lover."

The tears which indignation had suppressed, again burst forth at these words; and springing from her chair, Jacintha flew out of the parlour, ere her mother could stop her; and running up to her own chamber, locked herself in, and gave free vent to the anguish of her heart.

When somewhat relieved by the tears she shed, she reproached herself for weakness, in lamenting the loss of a man, whose conduct had proved him unworthy of her affection. So conscious was she of his not meriting to be regretted, that she strove to deceive herself into a belief her anguish was excited more by the humiliating circumstances with which his inconstancy was attended to her, than by that inconstancy itself.

Certain it was, these circumstances considerably heightened her distress; and so dreadful, so

insupportable was the idea of being continually subject to the sarcasms, the taunts, the upbraidings, and tyranny of her mother and sister, that only for the ardent affection she felt for her father....the strong sense of propriety which she entertained, she would, in all probability, have forsaken her home, and thrown herself upon her own exertions for support; encouraged as she was to do so, by the success with which such a measure had been attended to a young girl, who, under similar circumstances, had eloped from the village to London about a twelvemonth before.

Filial tenderness and native delicacy, however, prevented her from forming any rash resolves, and since compelled to bear her mother's ill-temper, and sister's ill-nature, she resolved to try and endure both, with a fortitude and patience, which should, in some degree, defeat their malice, by concealing the misery it inflicted: however torn, however lacerated her heart might be by their unkindness, she resolved never to utter an expression which could create a suspicion of its sufferings.

In pursuance of this resolution, she assumed an appearance very foreign to her real feelings; and frequently mortified and provoked both her mother and sister, by the seeming indifference with which she hearkened to their ill-natured remarks and insinuations, concerning Oswald. But in the privacy of her chamber, she made herself ample amends for the restraint she imposed upon her feelings before them. She there wept over the idea of her unhappy situation; she there shed tears, even more bitter than those drawn from her by reflections upon that situation: for Oswald, who, notwithstanding all her efforts to forget him,

her resentment, her indignation at his conduct, still maintained his empire over her heart.

She felt greatly hurt, to hear he was still entertained at Mr. Frankland's. When we are injured, we naturally wish all our friends to espouse our cause, and resent our injuries. Upon consideration, however, she could not doubt that Mr. Frankland, who was a man of the nicest honour himself, highly condemned the manner in which he had acted; but that he deemed it more advisable, on her account, to let the affair sink into oblivion, than make it public by expressing his displeasure.

She now rejoiced she had not been more frank in her communications to his daughters, and that consequently very few were acquainted with the humiliating treatment she had received.

---

CHAP. IV.

---

" Fancy pours  
" Afresh his beauties on his busy thought;  
" Her first endearments twining round the soul,  
" With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love." *Sid.*

---

OSWALD's efforts to conquer his attachment for Jacintha, were not more successful than those she had made to subdue her affection for him. Like her, however, his pride stimulated him to hide his feelings, and carefully conceal from his friends the severe pain inflicted by his disappointment.

In the neighbourhood of Mr. Frankland, there were no houses suited to the taste of lady Henry; but within two miles of Wyefield she heard of one, which, as far as she could judge from description, was exactly the kind of residence she wished for.

She had strong objections to it, however, on account of her son, as she feared its vicinity to Wyefield might strengthen unpleasant remembrances, and, perhaps, counteract all the efforts of reason and resolution. Oswald, guessing the motives which made her hesitate about it, exerted himself to remove her apprehensions; and, finally, prevailed upon her to take it, as they found, upon a visit to it, that description had but done it justice.

It was an old mansion, perfectly commodious notwithstanding its antiquity; and had it even been less pleasant within, the almost boundless prospect it commanded of an enchanting country, would have rendered it a desirable habitation. The court in which it stood, was planted with oaks, which appeared as ancient as itself, and which, when in full foliage, completely shaded it from the road; a fine wood bordered it on one side, and on the other stretched luxuriant meads, diversified with little groves and cottages, beautifully watered by winding rivulets, and terminated by the picturesque village of Wyefield, towards which the eyes of Egbert were not directed without emotions he could not always conceal.

In this quiet and delightful retreat lady Henry might again have been happy, could she have obliterated the bitter remembrance of past events from her mind; but the idea of a beloved husband, sunk to an untimely grave by the weight of accumulated misfortunes, was a never-failing source of affliction, which time could not diminish or assuage. Her sorrows, however, like her charities, were silent and unobtrusive; and her forced composure often led her friends to believe she was in some degree happy, at the very moment her bosom was heaving with the pang of anguish.

Conquering her love for solitude on her son's account, she resolved to cultivate an intimacy with all the respectable and agreeable families in the neighbourhood. She knew the youthful mind must be amused, and considered an agreeable home as often a better preservative for virtue, than any moral doctrine whatsoever.



Her intention of residing near Wyefield, was known throughout the village, previous to her arrival at her new habitation; and Mrs. Greville, delighted to think she should at length have an opportunity of being acquainted with a lady of quality, determined to be among the first who should pay their compliments to her. Her pleasure, indeed, at this idea would have been superlative, but that she feared an explanation might now take place between Egbert and Jacintha, which would defeat all her schemes, and expose her treachery. In consequence of this apprehension, she resolved to keep a more vigilant watch than ever over Jacintha, prevent her, if possible, from having a private conference with Egbert, and do all in her power to increase the resentment her arts had already inspired them with against each other.

By this management, she hoped not only to remove every cause for fear, but forward her schemes in favour of Gertrude. She had already found means of learning that no attachment existed between Egbert and Miss Meredith, and consequently flattered herself there was no further obstacle in the way of her wishes, than what proceeded from (as she trusted) the trifling remains of his passions for Jacintha.

In order to try and terminate the incertitude which she could not help feeling on this head, she resolved on letting Jacintha accompany her in the first visit she paid to lady Oswald, flattering herself she should be able to ascertain the sentiments of Egbert respecting her, by the manner in which he acted upon this visit.

Jacintha received permission to accompany her in it with a palpitating heart; a thousand agreea-

ble hopes and expectations had been revived on hearing of Egbert's coming to reside in their neighbourhood, and she looked forward to this expected interview with trembling emotion, as to an event which was finally to confirm or crush those hopes.

Lady Henry was scarce settled in her new abode, ere Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, dressed out to the best advantage, and accompanied by Mr. Greville and Jacintha, set out to pay their respects to her.

Her ladyship and her father were sitting together when they were announced. The major instantly rose to quit the room, nor without the utmost difficulty was prevailed upon to remain in it; as he declared the sight of the little crocodile, who had acted so perfidiously to his dear boy, would be quite intolerable to him.

Lady Henry received her visitors in the most gracious manner; and the major, notwithstanding his resolution to dislike the whole family, gradually recovered his good humour, and began to enter into conversation, but studiously avoided paying any attention to Jacintha; and in order to render his neglect of her more striking, and he hoped more mortifying, he singled out her sister by a number of little gallantries, not unbecoming his time of life, and paid her the most flattering compliments upon her beauty.

The pleasure which lady Henry's reception gave Mrs. Greville and the girls, was somewhat damped by the absence of Egbert; they had not sat long, however, before she sent a servant to search about the grounds for him, and in a few minutes he entered the room animated, unembarrassed, and apparently unagitated. He had indeed, on receiv-

ing his mother's summons, called all his pride to his aid, to suppress every emotion which could give either her or Jacintha an idea of the continuance of his attachment; and so well did he act his part, so completely did he counterfeit composure and indifference, that the latter, at least, was perfectly deceived, and Mrs. Greville almost convinced that she had succeeded in making an eternal breach between them. The joy, the delight which this supposition afforded her, could scarcely be concealed; she triumphed at beholding the too visible distress of Jacintha, and nothing but the presence of her husband prevented her from turning it into ridicule on their way home.

Her thorough conviction of Egbert's indifference...a conviction attended by floods of tears, and the most bitter anguish, strengthened Jacintha's determination of endeavouring to expel him from her heart. She reproached herself for weakness, in having, for a moment, indulged any flattering hopes concerning him; and accused herself for want of proper pride, in having desired the realization of such hopes, after his unworthy conduct towards her. Henceforth, she resolved to avoid his company; too well assured, notwithstanding all her indignation and resentment against him, that it was only by shunning his society, by sedulously flying from his idea, that she could ever hope to conquer her attachment.

Her efforts to avoid him, it may readily be believed, were not counteracted by Mrs. Greville; and were so very obvious to Egbert, by her being frequently out of the way when he came to her father's, and almost continually declining to accompany her mother to lady Henry's, which Mrs. Greville always took care to mention, that not a

doubt of her total disregard could be entertained; but whatever pain a conviction of it excited, he took care to confine it to his own breast.

The mild and unaffected deportment of Mr. Greville, and the cheerful and obliging disposition of his wife, who, when she chose to please, was perfectly capable of doing so, gained so much upon the esteem of lady Henry and her father, that an intimacy was soon established between the two families...an intimacy productive of greater gratification to Mrs. Greville than she had ever before experienced; as lady Henry, in pursuance of her resolution, cultivated an acquaintance with all the respectable families in her neighbourhood. Still, however, she saw nothing like particularity in Egbert's attentions to Gertrude: the hint, indeed, which had been dropped in the supposed letter from Jacintha, respecting the favourable sentiments that young lady entertained for him, made him very cautious in his conduct to her, as he was by no means ambitious of exciting a passion which he could not return.

The most pleasing intimacy which Egbert formed at Wyefield, was with a young man of the name of Woodville. Frank, generous, and animated, like himself, in consequence of the marriage of a relation of his with the sister of Mr. Greville (both then absent in the East-Indies), he considered himself, in some degree, connected with that worthy man; and from this consideration felt quite as easy and familiar at his house as at his own. His long intimacy with the family, made him perfectly acquainted with the disposition of every member of it; and the high eulogiums he bestowed upon Jacintha, whom Egbert, notwithstanding his positive determination never, if possible, to think

about, frequently made the subject of conversation, but without hinting at his attachment, did not by any means lessen the impression she had made upon his mind, or abate the regret he felt at his disappointment concerning her.

Nor were the many instances which Jacintha daily heard of his charity and benevolence, less calculated to keep alive his image in her bosom: and she sighed to think that only to her she had reason to believe he had ever acted unworthily.

Oh! how often has the resentment inspired by this fancied unworthiness, fled from her heart, as she has listened to the warm plaudits bestowed upon him by gratitude and esteem!—Oh! how often in these moments, when she has witnessed the change effected by his means from misery to gladness, and heard not only his eulogium, but his mother's, who was neither less feeling nor less beneficent, has she secretly exclaimed...“My happiness would have been too, too great, had I been allied to such beings!”

The attentions which she received from lady Henry upon every occasion, gained as much upon her affection, as her virtues had done upon her esteem. Her ladyship regarded her indeed with the fondest partiality and admiration; the prejudice she had conceived against her from her rejection of Oswald, or rather the motives which she supposed had led to that rejection, vanished on obtaining a knowledge of her disposition, which convinced her, in her conduct to him, she could never have been influenced by any other motives than those alledged in the letter; and she sincerely regretted the termination of all hopes of an union between them.

The summer passed away without any thing material happening. Lady Oswald still maintained a combat with her feelings, in order to appear composed and cheerful; but her smothered anguish soon began to prey upon her health, and by the latter end of autumn, she appeared in a most alarming state. Still, however, she tried to quiet the fears, and sooth the anxiety of her friends: but the severe shock she received from the sudden death of her father, who was found dead in his bed one morning, when the servant went to call him to breakfast, by dissolving every hope of recovery, made her at length assume a very different conduct, and instead of flattering her friends, endeavoured to prepare them for an event which she now saw rapidly approaching.

To that event she would have looked forward with the most perfect composure, but for the apprehensions and solicitude she suffered on her son's account. She feared the melancholy and solitary situation in which he would feel himself upon her decease, might induce him to fly to the metropolis, where she trembled to think of the snares which, unfriended and unguarded as he was either by age or experience, he might be entangled in....snares which the vicious and designing, she knew, were ever on the watch to spread for the young, the innocent, the credulous...for those who, like him, were too amiable to be suspicious, and too impetuous to be considerate.

After much reflection, she determined to disclose her disquietudes respecting him to Mr. Greville, who was now her constant visiter; and entreat that good man to take upon himself the office of friend, adviser, and guardian to Egbert, when

she was no more, and permit him to reside under his roof till he was of age, where she knew he would enjoy the same kind of rational society, the same domestic comforts, he had ever been accustomed to, and consequently feel no necessity to search for amusement or happiness elsewhere. By the time he was of age, of which he now wanted somewhat more than a year, she trusted his mind would be so perfectly restored to its usual cheerfulness and tranquillity, that he might be able to return to his own habitation; where it was her ardent wish for him to fix his future residence, as she utterly abhorred the idea of a town-life for him.

Mr. Greville heard her fears without surprise, and granted her request without hesitation.

"Oh! my dear, my worthy friend!" she cried, in the fulness of her heart, "at this moment language is too weak to express the obligations you have laid me under, by your compliance with my wishes; by accepting the care of my sole treasure, you have smoothed my passage to the grave....you have divested my soul of every uneasiness."

Egbert was sent for, and informed of what had passed between his mother and her friend.

He was too much affected by this striking proof of her solicitude and regard for him, to be able to speak for some minutes, or give that solemn promise to comply with her wishes, which she eagerly demanded.

She took his trembling hand, and putting it into Greville's, pressed them both with fervour between her's.

"Henceforth, my dearest Egbert," she exclaimed, "look up to this worthy man as to a friend...a father: in that light I once hoped, I still

wish....” Here a glance from Egbert checked what she was about saying, and after a momentary pause, she continued : “ Pay him the obedience of a son, let his precepts warn you, his example guide you, his tenderness console you ; and oh ! never, never let him have reason to regret his compliance with the request of thy adoring and dying mother.”

Egbert, still unable to speak, from the emotions she excited, laid his hand in expressive silence upon his heart, while Greville turned aside to wipe away his starting tears.

Egbert had frequently importuned his mother to try what change of climate might do for her ; and as soon as he had recovered some degree of composure, again spoke to her on that subject.

She stopped him short, however, by assuring him, in a more serious...a more solemn manner, than she had ever done before, that she was firmly persuaded no climate, however genial, could now effect the restoration of her health. “ The awful summons has arrived,” cried she, “ which must be obeyed ; here then let the short residue of my days be passed ; in no other spot could they close with so much tranquillity and happiness, as here, among my real friends.”

Mrs. Greville was extremely well pleased at the idea of Egbert’s becoming an inmate of her house ; for, as she believed his attachment to Jacintha utterly obliterated, she flattered herself his being constantly under the same roof with Gertrude, might at length bring about the event she had so long wished and projected.

Both she and Gertrude redoubled their attentions to lady Oswald, not however, we believe, from the most disinterested motives : Jacintha, from real regard, would have been happy to have united her services to their’s, but was not permitted.



They were preparing to follow Mr. Greville one morning to her ladyship's, when a messenger came from her house to inform them all was over with lady Oswald, who had breathed her last sigh, about ten minutes after the arrival of Mr. Greville, in the arms of her beloved son!

"Poor dear woman!" cried Mrs. Greville, returning into the parlour, and pulling out her handkerchief, "I am really very sorry; but I thought, indeed, she could not last long."

"No, to be sure," exclaimed Gertrude, as she folded up her cloak, "she looked shockingly last night. Lord! I think her death must be a very happy release to poor Mr. Oswald, as well as to herself, since there were no hopes of her recovery."

"Yes indeed, I think so too," replied Mrs. Greville.

Here Jacintha, who was at work in the parlour, hastily rose, and quitting the room with indignation....an indignation she did not attempt to conceal, repaired to her own, where she gave vent to the sorrow inspired by the death of lady Oswald: but she did not weep for her alone; pity for the son was intermingled with regret for the mother. She could easily picture to herself what his feelings must be at losing such a parent, such a friend; and she shed as many tears, perhaps, at the idea of his sufferings, as at the melancholy event which caused them.

She was not long permitted to indulge her dejection. Mrs. Greville soon called her from her chamber, to desire she would see the apartments destined for Mr. Oswald prepared immediately for his reception. Perhaps this was the only order which she could at that moment have obeyed without reluctance: for though convinced, his residing

under the same roof with her, would make her be more narrowly watched than ever, and oblige her to observe the greatest circumspection in all her words, her looks, her actions, lest the secret of her heart should be discovered, she could not avoid being pleased at the idea of it.

Notwithstanding immediate preparations were made for him, Egbert did not remove to Mr. Greville's till the last mournful duties had been paid to the remains of his mother; his own house was then shut up, and all the servants, except one, who accompanied him to his new abode, dismissed.

But neither change of residence, nor the attentions of Mr. Greville's family, could dispel the gloomy sadness which took possession of his mind, from the moment his mother expired. In losing her, he lost not only the tenderest of parents, but his only natural friend, the only relation whom his heart acknowledged; and he could not help considering himself as a dreary, solitary, unconnected being, without a claim upon the attentions of any human creature, but what common friendship gave him.

He brooded over this idea, of all others, perhaps, the most afflictive to a heart of sensibility, with the deepest anguish; and his health soon began to suffer from the depression of his mind.

Woodville, who felt deeply interested about him, united his efforts to those Mr. Greville used to try and rouse him from it. He at length prevailed on him to make an excursion in his company into North-Wales. Constant exercise, change of scene, and the agreeable society he was led into, had the happiest effect upon Egbert; and, at the expiration of two months, he returned to Wyefield with renovated health and spirits.

Jacintha, who had not more secretly than sincerely lamented the declining state in which he left her father's, rejoiced at beholding this happy change. In the sympathy, the pity, his melancholy excited in her bosom, her resentment against him had been utterly forgotten; nor could she so far revive it, as to overcome her tenderness, even when he had ceased to affect her sensibility.

Her efforts, however, to conceal that tenderness, were not so difficult as she had at first dreaded they would prove; pride, lending its aid to strengthen them, in consequence of the coolness, the indifference of Oswald's manner to her upon every occasion.

Encouraged by this cold and negligent behaviour to Jacintha, Mrs. Greville and Gertrude began their long meditated attacks upon his heart. Oswald, however, aware of their designs, though without appearing to be so, always stood upon his guard, and took care, neither by words nor looks, to give them the smallest hope of ever succeeding in such designs. But in defiance of his caution and reserve, they resolved on persevering in them; for time and perseverance, they knew, had often effected wonders, and on these they relied to bring about the accomplishment of their wishes.

The return of christmas revived, or rather rendered more acute a thousand painful remembrances in the mind of Jacintha; and she was compelled to struggle with her feelings, in order to be able to preserve any appearance of cheerfulness.

The visit which she and Gertrude had been so long in the habit of making to the house of Mr. Frankland, was this season prevented by the removal of his family to Bath; a circumstance

which would have mortified and disappointed Gertrude very severely, but for the amusements she partook of in the neighbourhood. From these, as well as from every other pleasure, Jacintha was almost entirely excluded by Mrs. Greville, who always contrived, however, some plausible pretext to Mr. Greville for leaving her at home. To impose upon him, indeed, was a very easy matter, as he was so completely deceived by her artful conduct and pretended virtues, that he submitted almost entirely to her judgment, and seldom interfered in the management of her family.

During the holidays he went with Mrs. Greville and Gertrude to pass a day at the house of a farmer who lived about three miles from Wye-field; and that very morning Egbert set off with Woodville to a gentleman's seat at the other side of Chester, where they intended staying a week.

Jacintha spent a lonely and melancholy day. The pointed neglect and unkindness of her mother, in thus excluding her from society, and confining her to home, weighed heavy upon her heart, as well as many other circumstances.

About evening the weather became so tempestuous and severe, that she began to be doubtful of the return of her parents that night; she resolved, however, on sitting up for them, while there was the least likelihood of it.

The maid and the boys went early to bed; and Jacintha took up a book in order to beguile the tediousness of time, and divert her reflections, which became more sorrowful on being left to herself. The pathetic play of Tancred and Sigismunda was not calculated, however, to dispel the melancholy of her thoughts; and her tears

soon began to stream for her own sorrows, and those of the amiable and unfortunate lovers.

For many minutes after she had concluded reading, she remained in a mournful reverie, contrasting her present feelings with those she had experienced at this season the preceding year; and, like poor Margaret, she was ready to exclaim, as she thought upon the cruelty of Egbert's conduct....

“ How could you say my face was fair,

“ And yet that face forsake?

“ How could you win my virgin heart,

“ Yet leave that heart to break?”

She was roused from her melancholy meditations by the increasing fury of the storm, which howled with savage violence around the house, drifting the snow in heaps against it, and frequently shaking it to its very base. She now relinquished all hopes of seeing her father and mother that night, for none who could obtain shelter from such a storm would, she imagined, brave its violence; and, with a sigh of compassion for those who might be exposed to the inclemency of the present hour, she was about retiring to her chamber, when, between the pauses of the wind, she fancied she heard voices. She instantly became alarmed; and hastening to a window, and half opening the shutter, by the light which was reflected from the parlour upon the garden, beheld two men within a few paces of the house. With trembling hands she fastened up the window; but ere she had well closed it, an unsuccessful effort was made to open the hall-door, which was followed by a loud knock. She now thought of flying to the chamber of the maid; but recollecting that presence of mind often pre-

vented danger, she took up a light, and softly ascending the stairs, opened the window, and demanded who required admission?

"Friends," replied a voice, which she instantly knew to be Oswald's.

Jacintha nearly screamed from surprise; but without stopping to inquire the cause of his unexpected return, she flew down to admit him and his servant.

The moment he entered, he expressed his fears of having alarmed her, and assured her he should have slept at the inn where he stopped to have his horses put up, had he not perceived a light glimmering through the parlour windows.

Jacintha endeavoured to hide the flutter his sudden return had thrown her into, by busying herself in procuring him such refreshments as he seemed to require.

Egbert gave her a thousand thanks for her kind attention, and also informed her, that his coming back so soon, was owing to the illness of the gentleman whom he and Woodville had gone to visit.

"Woodville proposed," said he, "my accompanying him a little farther, to the habitation of another friend; but I was not in a humour to relish festivity, so turned homewards in spite of wind and weather."

Jacintha having stirred the fire into a cheerful blaze, and laid wine and other things before him, wished him good night, and was retiring, when he suddenly caught her hand.

"In such a hurry to leave me?" cried he, reproachfully.

Jacintha said, she had merely sat up for her father and mother, whom she had now given up all expectation of seeing that night.

"I hope," cried Egbert, "you will not deem me impertinently curious, if I ask whether any thing has happened to distress you; for I cannot behold the traces of tears upon your cheek without making the inquiry?"

"Nothing *new*," replied Jacintha, laying an involuntary emphasis on the last word; then, suddenly recollecting herself, and blushing at the surmises which her manner of speaking might excite, and alarmed lest the real cause of the tears she had been shedding might be suspected, she hastily added, she had been reading a melancholy book, which had affected her spirits.

"You can feel then for fictitious woes," said Egbert, "while you disregard real ones."

"I hope not," cried Jacintha, with much resentment both in her voice and countenance; "I should be sorry to think I had any false sensibility in my disposition."

"Permit me to try," said Egbert, "permit me to try whether a narrative of real sorrows will affect you as much as one of imaginary woes has done?"

"What narrative...whose sorrows do you mean?" demanded Jacintha.

"My own," replied Egbert, in a serious accent, and looking stedfastly at her as he spoke.

"Excuse me," said Jacintha, affecting a careless and unconcerned manner, in order to hide the confusion created by his looks; "I never wish to hear sorrows to which I cannot administer some consolation."

"But if you were assured you could administer consolation," cried Egbert, eagerly, "would you then refuse to hear them?"

"Yes, any thing to night," replied Jacintha; "for 'tis far beyond my usual hour of sitting up."

"I should be extremely sorry, madam," cried Egbert, dropping her hand, and visibly piqued by her seeming indifference, "to break in upon your rest." He then presented a light to her, and opening the parlour door, in a very ceremonious manner, wished her good night.

"Ah!" cried Jacintha, as she slowly ascended the stairs, half glad, half sorry she had left him, "you little know how much you have disturbed my rest....how greatly, how fatally you have injured my happiness and repose!"

The more she reflected upon his words....his manner, the more agitated she felt herself; and it required all the efforts of reason to repel the suggestions of hope: but she had suffered too severely from recent disappointment, to permit herself again to yield to its flatteries; yet, notwithstanding all the calmness, the indifference, she tried to assume when she thought of Egbert, she could not think of meeting him in the morning without a fluttering sensation of delight and expectation.

Restless and perturbed, she rose at an early hour. In her way to the stairs she was obliged to pass Oswald's study; the door was open, and to her extreme surprise, she beheld a breakfast-table laid before the fire, and Oswald himself, booted, spurred, and completely equipped for going out, looking very attentively over some papers at a desk.

It instantly occurred to her he was going upon some excursion; and the conjecture was attended by a pang, which convinced her, notwithstanding all her resolution to the contrary, that she had listened rather more believingly to the whispers of hope than she should have done.



Oswald caught a glimpse of her as she was passing; he hurried after her, and taking her hand, entreated her to come in, and take a cup of coffee with him. "I did not imagine," cried he, "that you would forsake your pillow at so early an hour, and therefore ordered breakfast, as I have a long journey before me to-day, to the house of Mr. Meredith."

At the mention of this name, which she could never hear without uneasiness, the heart of Jacintha almost died away, and she felt her colour change; she wished to quit Oswald, lest her painful emotions, or rather the cause of these emotions, should be discovered; but was too much agitated to make an effort to do so.

He accordingly led her into the study; and having placed her beside the fire, begged she would be so obliging as to pour out the coffee, while he put up the papers he had been examining.

Jacintha's eyes were involuntarily directed towards him; amongst the scattered papers which he was now busy in collecting, she perceived an open casket containing some very valuable ornaments (the identical ones which had been purchased for her acceptance). At this sight, all her apprehensions concerning Miss Meredith were confirmed; she could not doubt that Oswald was going to make final proposals to her, and that these ornaments were intended for a nuptial present.

She trembled...she could scarcely breathe from the agony occasioned by this supposition; and with difficulty prevented her tears from falling.

Egbert, turning with quickness from the desk, perceived her eyes fastened upon the casket. He directly caught it up, and closing it in an agitation which surprised Jacintha, flung it from him, ex-

claiming, "What painful remembrances does this excite!"

Jacintha averted her head, and began to pour out the coffee: but spilt more than half of it in doing so.

"Oh God!" cried Egbert, clasping his hands together, and traversing the room with a disordered step; "when first that casket came into my possession, what hopes, what prospects of felicity were mine! How great a change has taken place in one short year! How have all these hopes, these prospects, been blasted...been utterly annihilated!"

Jacintha, no longer able to controul her feelings, burst into an agony of tears, and started up in order to quit the room.

"Good Heaven!" said Egbert, hastily placing himself between her and the door, and catching her hand, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing," replied Jacintha, in extreme confusion; "I am not very well, my spirits are low. Pray, Mr. Oswald, do not detain me."

"Has any thing I have said," asked Egbert, with trembling eagerness, "affected you? But no," he continued, in a melancholy tone; "I cannot flatter myself it has. Some secret grief...some unknown sorrow, causes this emotion. Oh, Miss Greville! could you look into my heart, could you conceive the strong anxiety it feels...the interest it takes in whatever concerns you, you would not deem me impertinently curious if I desired to know the occasion of your tears."

"You anxious! you interested about me!" exclaimed Jacintha, with involuntary warmth, no longer able to suppress the resentment, the

indignation with which his supposed perfidy had inspired her. "You anxious! you interested about me!" she repeated, half withdrawing the handkerchief which concealed her face, and darting a look of ineffable disdain and scorn upon him; "Oh! Mr. Oswald, such an assertion from you is like mockery and insult."

"Mockery and insult!" cried Egbert; "good heaven! Miss Greville, how have I merited such language....such reproaches from you?"

"A little reflection upon your own conduct will inform you," replied Jacintha; "but I beg you'll let me go; 'tis a subject upon which I never meant to speak....which I regret having been so unwarily led to touch upon."

"Let you go!" replied Egbert, passionately, his eyes sparkling, his cheeks glowing; "no, never, by heaven, till you explain the meaning of your words!"

"Since you force me, then, to speak," said Jacintha, whose efforts to disengage herself were utterly unavailing, "I must inform you, that after what passed at Mr. Frankland's....."

"True, madam," cried Egbert, with increasing vehemence, "true, madam," said he, on finding she paused; "after what passed there, I had a right to expect very different conduct from you....after what passed there, I had a right to accuse you of cruelty, perfidy, deceit!"

"You rave," interrupted Jacintha.

"What!" exclaimed he, "do you not allow me a right to complain? After giving me such encouragement, after accepting my addresses, after permitting me to come to Wyefield, for the express purpose of being introduced to your family, and having every thing settled for our union....

after all these circumstances, does not the letter you sent me....."

"I sent you!" cried Jacintha, "I know not what you mean; I never wrote to you, I never heard of your coming to Wyefield on such a purpose as you mention!"

"Never!" said Egbert, grasping both her hands! "Swear all this to me!"

"I do," cried Jacintha; "by all my hopes of happiness hereafter, I never wrote to you....never heard of the visit you allude to!"

"I can no longer doubt you," said Egbert; "some vile scheme has been contrived to separate us, which I trust this explanation will render abortive; for may I not....." Here Jacintha, trembling, almost fainting, motioned for a chair. Egbert supported her to one; he knelt before her, his arm circled her waist, and he repeated the question which she had interrupted...."May I not believe," cried he, "that but for the detestable artifice which has been practised, I should long ere this have attained the summit of my wishes?"

Jacintha could not speak, but her looks rendered language unnecessary; and Egbert clasped her to his bosom, in a transport of joy and tenderness.

"This moment, this blissful moment," exclaimed Egbert, "makes me ample amends for all my sufferings! Oh, my Jacintha! words are faint to express the feelings I experience at again holding you to my heart, with a full assurance of your returning its affection."

"And yet, considering that affection," cried Jacintha, half smiling, "you seemed to sit very easy under your imaginary disappointment."

"My pride stifled my complaints," said Egbert. "I could not bear the idea of incurring that ridicule which a despairing lover too frequently excites; and as to importuning you, it was quite out of the question; for as I then believed you totally indifferent to me, I did not desire your hand;...the warmth, the ardour, the jealousy of my disposition, not permitting me to entertain a hope of happiness with the woman I loved, except convinced her heart, as well as her person, was mine. Like the poet, I may say,

"In all my Ema's beauties blest,

"Amidst profusion still I'd pine,

"If, when she gave me up her breast,

"Its panting tenant was not mine."

Egbert now inquired whether she had a suspicion of the hand from whence the letter came, which had given him such wretchedness?

Jacintha started, and blushed at this question. It was too evident to her who the fabricators of it were; too evident that it was the hand of a mother and a sister, who had aimed such a blow at her peace.

Unwilling, however, to expose them to the shame, the contempt, the detestation, they merited, she implored Egbert, with much earnestness, not to make any further inquiry upon the subject. "Rest satisfied," said she, "with detecting the falsehood, and trouble not yourself about the contrivers of it."

"I see, I see how it is," cried Egbert, with the quickness of lightning; "'tis to domestic treachery we owe all the misery we have suffered.... Gracious Heaven! how monstrous, how shocking! ....But they shall not escape the reproaches they deserve!"

"Dearest Oswald," said Jacintha, alarmed by his violence, "for my sake let the affair sink into oblivion. Oh! do not damp the pleasures of our reconciliation, by doing or saying any thing which can create unhappiness in my family."

"Well," replied Egbert, "I cannot give you a more convincing proof of my love, than by curbing the strong resentment I feel against some part of it."

"I accept it as such," said Jacintha; "and be assured I shall not be ungrateful for it."

Egbert again caught her to his heart....again held her there as a long-lost treasure, which had been almost miraculously restored.

When their mutual agitation had a little subsided, Egbert declared his intention of speaking, without delay, to Mr. Greville on the subject of his attachment to Jacintha, and proposing an immediate union.

This was an intention which met with no opposition from Jacintha; on the contrary, she did not, she could not deny that it gave her pleasure.

Too agreeably engaged to notice the progress of time, they were at length surprised by the entrance of the groom, who, having been roused by his master at the first dawn of day, to get every thing ready for his journey, was not a little astonished at his delaying it so long, and accordingly came to say the horses were waiting. Egbert ordered them to be put up; but the servant had scarcely quitted the room, before Mrs. Greville's voice was heard below. Jacintha instantly flew down to receive her; and Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, according to their usual custom, were beginning to give an exaggerated account of the

entertainment they had been at, when the sudden entrance of Egbert put a total stop to their eloquence. "Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Greville, after a momentary silence, during which she eyed him attentively, "I did not expect to find you here, Mr. Oswald."

Egbert carelessly recounted the cause of his unexpected return.

The triumph, the animation of his looks, together with the sunshine which illumined the countenance of Jacintha, and a kind of trembling confusion in her manner, gave rise [to very unpleasant suspicions in the mind of Mrs. Greville.

Though the day was intensely cold, her face began to glow from agitation; and scarcely knowing what she did, she fanned herself with the corner of her apron. Her alarm was not by any means diminished, when Egbert, after chatting a few minutes, requested Mr. Greville to accompany him to his library; a request which the good man directly complied with.

Mrs. Greville now endeavoured to terminate her suspense, and learn whether the explanation she dreaded had taken place between Egbert and Jacintha, by putting many artful questions to the latter, which she, however, found means to evade; determined not to satisfy the curiosity of her mother, till she knew how Egbert's proposals were received by her father.

To these proposals Mr. Greville listened with his usual calmness. When Egbert had ceased speaking, he said, he considered his daughter highly honoured by his addresses, and candidly confessed she could no where form an union more pleasing to him; but at the same time declared, it was an union which he could not permit to take place till Egbert was of age.

Egbert tried to combat this resolution by all the eloquence in his power to exert; but in vain. Mr. Greville continued inflexible; and he was compelled to reconcile himself to present disappointment by the prospect of future happiness, and permission to pay to Jacintha the open attentions of a sanctioned lover.

Though Jacintha did not as openly acknowledge it, she felt scarcely less regret at the determination of her father, than Egbert. The tyranny of her mother, the malice of her sister, rendered a residence under the same roof with them, at least while she continued in their power, almost insupportable.

The mortifications, the humiliations she had before suffered from them, were slight, compared to those she endured in consequence of their rage and envy, at finding their schemes to separate her and Egbert, were defeated. Had they beheld him the professed lover, the husband of any other woman, though the hopes of Gertrude would have been equally disappointed, they would not have been half so much affected; and though policy, perhaps, dictated a very different conduct to Jacintha, from the prospect of her being soon independent, they could not so far overcome their hatred towards her, and evil propensities, as to practise it.

Egbert upon every occasion took her part; and at these times nothing but a fear of offending him, prevented Mrs. Greville from venting her ill-humour and indignation upon him, as well as Jacintha; but the very great advantages she derived from his being in her house, made her cautious not to speak in such a manner as should drive him from it.



But though she curbed her temper, she could not, or rather did not, attempt to controul the inclination she felt to vex him by her actions. She accordingly thwarted his wishes to the extent of her power, by preventing almost any intercourse between him and Jacintha; still contriving to impose upon Mr. Greville, by making him believe, in this respect, as well as in every other, she was influenced alone by propriety and prudence; any interference from him, therefore, was not to be expected.

Egbert and Jacintha, perceiving their mutual uneasiness at the unpleasant restraint imposed upon them, only gratified her malignancy, determined at last to suppress all appearance of it; seem to submit patiently to her controul, and rest satisfied with conversing in private.

The pleasure experienced in these stolen interviews, amply compensated for the difficulty with which they were procured.

But those hours were not devoted entirely to love. Egbert spent many of them in instructing Jacintha in such accomplishments as he wished his wife to possess, but which Mr. Greville had not considered it necessary for his daughters to acquire; thinking (justly perhaps) that girls, destined as they were, in all probability, to an humble sphere, required only an useful education.

Jacintha's progress in her new studies exceeded the expectations of Egbert; and the expanding beauties of her mind heightened that admiration and esteem, which the charms of her person, and the sweetness of her disposition, had first inspired.

## CHAP. V.

" These are the matchless joys of virtuous love ;  
" And thus their moments fly."

**TIME** rolled on, without making any alteration in the conduct of Mrs. Greville. But in proportion as they drew nearer to the happy period which was to unite them, Egbert and Jacintha became less affected by it.

About the beginning of summer it was rumoured throughout the village, that lord Gwytherin was expected home. Mrs. Greville felt particularly anxious to know whether there was any truth in the report ; and she was soon gratified on this head by Mrs. Conway, the housekeeper at the park, who came in one evening, just as a little party of her neighbours were sitting down to Pope-Joan.

" Cot pless my soul !" cried Mrs. Conway, who was a little bustling Welchwoman, and considered of very great importance in the village, " I am in such a flutter, and such a commotion....."

" What ! is your lord really coming down ?" demanded Mrs. Greville, eagerly interrupting her.

" Yes, he returned to England about a fortnight ago ; and a messenger arrived this morning at the castle, to say he would be at it in a few days. I am sure I don't know how we shall

ever be able to get every thing in order against he comes."

"I thought," said Mrs. Greville, who was playing chess with Egbert, but had stopped to listen to Mrs. Conway, "that his lordship had bidden an almost eternal adieu to his ancient home."

"Aye, so we all thought," replied the house-keeper; "but I suppose he began at last to consider it was a sin and a shame to be spending all his money in foreign parts."

"Well, I am sure I am glad he is coming to the park," said Mrs. Greville; "it will enliven the village a little."

"That it will," cried Mrs. Conway; "we shall have rare doings, I promise you. My lord is to bring a power of company with him, and Robert, who brought the news, says there is wine enough coming down to float all the cellars in the castle, and a great deal of new furniture, and fine *asiotics* for the hot-houses, and heaps of curiosities, which my lord purchased abroad, but which, by the bye, Robert says, are the greatest rubbish in the world, being nothing more than rusty coppers, and old pictures, and statues as halt and as maimed as some of the Greenwich pensioners."

"I told Robert, I was surprised my lord, who was a man of sense, would lay out his money upon such trumpery. But Robert said, if he had not done so, he would not have been reckoned a man of *virtue* abroad; and it seems, in foreign parts, gentlemen pride themselves on being men of *virtue*, which is more than they do at home: though, how a person can be thought more virtuous for buying old coppers, and faded pictures, and broken statues, I can't conceive."

"Nor I, indeed, Mrs. Conway," said Mr. Greville, smiling, as well as some more of the party, at her simplicity; "'tis neither a proof of virtue nor wisdom, in my opinion, I assure you."

"And so your lord is really coming among us again?" cried Mr. Jones, the old apothecary of the village, who, with his dame, was of Mrs. Greville's party. "Ah! he was a gay one in his youth; and if not much altered, we shall indeed, as you say, Mrs. Conway, have rare doings."

"Why, I believe he is not much altered," said Mrs. Conway, "from what I could gather from Robert."

"I am sorry his lordship has not benefitted by time and reflection," cried Mr. Greville; "the greatness of his understanding renders errors in him inexcusable."

"You know something of his lordship, then," said Jones; "I thought he had left Wyefield before you came to it."

"True," replied Mr. Greville, "but the *fame* of his lordship was not confined to the narrow limits of a village; and though I saw not, I heard of him....heard that, had half his outward graces been placed about the thoughts and counsels of his heart, he would have been one of the first of his sex."

"Your information was just," said Jones. "Had his mind been half as perfect as his form, half as amiable as his manners, he would have been unequalled. But sorry am I to say, that was not the case (we are among friends....at any rate his character is pretty generally known); many, many are the hearts upon which the libertinism of his principles has entailed anguish."

## NOCTURNAL VISIT.

"Aye; Cot forgive him!" said Mrs. Conway, 'tis all very true; he never could see a pretty woman, without trying to inveigle her in some way or other."

"Heaven have mercy upon you, then, Mrs. Conway," cried Jones; "I should not be surprised if you and your lord went in pilgrimage to the well of St. Winefrede."

"Cot give us all grace to resist temptation!" said Mrs. Conway, directing her eyes towards the glass.

"Well, don't be too much alarmed," exclaimed Mr. Jones; "I fancy the whole of his battery will not be directed against you."

The glance with which these words were accompanied to Jacintha, made her laugh.

Egbert, at this instant, rose abruptly, and snatched up his hat.

"Won't you sup at home, Mr. Oswald?" asked Mrs. Greville.

"I don't know....I can't tell....'tis very uncertain....but pray don't wait a moment for me:" saying, he quitted the room.

Jacintha felt greatly hurt and disconcerted at his going out. In spite of her reason, she could not help being uneasy, at the idea of his spending the evening with Woodville, or rather, the sister Woodville, a very lovely girl, who had lately come from London (where she resided with an aunt, both her parents being dead) to pass some time with her brother.

Her beauty, as well as vivacity, had drawn very warm plaudits from Egbert: and Jacintha began to fear, in consequence of his conduct this evening, that they had made a greater impression upon him than he would allow. Else why prefer Miss

Woodville's company to her's? and only to this preference could she impute his going out, particularly as she had promised to meet him after supper in the garden.

Her mother's visitors spent the evening at the house; but their gaiety could neither amuse Jacintha, nor induce her to remain long in the parlour. She withdrew to her chamber almost immediately after the removal of the cloth; and, putting out her light, placed herself at an open window to watch the return of Egbert.

A bright moon silvered the firmament, and cast its shadowy beams upon the high woods of Gwytherin park, which gently rustled in the breeze, while, from their deep recesses, the nightingale poured forth the softest strains of melody.

But neither the beauty nor serenity of the scene, could divert the thoughts of Jacintha from the object upon which they were fixed, or calm her uneasiness.

The guests withdrew, the family retired to rest; but still no Egbert appeared.

"How pleasantly engaged he must be," said Jacintha, "to be so unmindful of time! But no wonder...the polished graces, the unchecked vivacity of Miss Woodville cannot fail of making hours appear as minutes."

At length she saw him crossing the green; she directly started from the window, for not for worlds would she have had him know how she had been employed. Her heart, indeed, began to tell her she had injured him by harbouring, for a moment, a doubt of his constancy; yet, notwithstanding this pleasant assurance, she could not overcome the resentment she felt at his going out, after the promise he had received from her.

Her averted looks, and the coldness of her manner, struck Egbert the instant he beheld her the next morning; and he only waited till the boys, to whom she was giving their breakfast, had quitted the parlour, to inquire whether the alteration in her conduct was owing to the cause he suspected. Jacintha would not confess the truth; but Egbert at length saved her the trouble, by declaring he plainly perceived what was the matter: "And only I think you have some little reason for your present humour," said he, with an affected seriousness, "be assured I should be very much displeased at it; for I detest any thing like caprice. To apologize, however, for my conduct last night, without which I perceive I cannot regain your ladyship's smiles, I must inform you that I went out because I was vexed and irritated."

"Vexed and irritated!" repeated Jacintha, in extreme surprise; "about what?"

"Well, to confess my weakness, though you would not make a similar confession to me, about lord Gwytherin; I felt utterly disconcerted at the idea of his approaching visit to Wyefield."

"On what account?" eagerly demanded Jacintha.

"Need you ask?" said Egbert. "The miser watches his treasure with unceasing anxiety; and the lover with no less disquietude, fancies every eye directed, every heart attracted to the shrine at which he worships, with the most pernicious designs against his peace."

"But surely," cried Jacintha, with something like reproach in her voice, "you cannot doubt...."

"Your truth, your constancy," eagerly interrupted Egbert; "Oh no!....could I harbour, or rather had I reason to harbour such a doubt, I should

be of all men the most miserable; but the character of lord Gwytherin, the.....In short, let us speak no more upon the subject. I was very angry with myself for permitting my tranquillity to be disturbed about him. Half the wretchedness of our lives, indeed, I believe, proceeds from giving way to our imagination, which, when unrestrained, is apt to raise a thousand frightful images to annoy us. Would your father, however, consent to our immediate union, I should certainly feel happier than I do at present. Like Altamont, I should then be able to exclaim, "Begone, my cares, I give you to the winds!"

"Oh Egbert!" said Jacintha, from whose mind every trace of resentment was obliterated, "can you indeed suppose that union would make you dearer to me than you are at present? No; be assured, if I know my own heart, it could not."

Egbert was prevented making any reply to this speech by the sudden entry of Mrs. Greville, whose clouded countenance and sullen manner were so extremely disagreeable to him, that he quitted the room in order to breakfast with his friend Woodville.

The moment he had withdrawn, she vented, as usual, her ill-humour upon Jacintha. She asked her how she dared to spend her time in such a ridiculous, not to say shameful manner?... "I wondered," cried she, "what made Mr. Oswald so very early a riser; but now I have discovered the cause. I shall take care, however, in future, to let you have some other employment than that of flirting with him. I'll let you see you shan't eat the bread of idleness, or commence fine lady before your time."



The appearance of Mr. Greville silenced his wife; and Jacintha now learned that he was going to pass the day with a friend near Holywell, and that her mother and Gertrude were also going upon particular business to Chester, which would detain them there till night. Jacintha's looks testified the pleasure she felt, at the idea of being unrestrained by their presence throughout the day. But this pleasure was of short duration: on her father's leaving the parlour, Mrs. Greville told her she had left out some work for her to do, which she should expect to find finished on her return.

"Remember," cried she, "the boys will be at home, and will let me know how you pass your time." Jacintha could not, without difficulty, suppress the resentment and indignation with which this treatment inspired her.

"I trust, madam," cried she, with a heightened colour, "I shall never pass my time in any way which can be disgraceful to myself, or which should be displeasing to my friends."

"Oh! to be sure; but your fine speeches won't impose upon me: so remember, I shall expect you observe my directions."

Jacintha made no reply, fearful of saying any thing which might raise a storm that could not easily, perhaps, be laid.

Immediately after breakfast Mr. and Mrs. Greville set out upon their respective routes; he on foot, and she in a one-horse chaise, belonging to the landlord of the inn; a vehicle in much use and estimation among the villagers.

Jacintha began her task with very great reluctance; but she strove to banish unpleasant feelings, by looking forward to the happy period which would anticipate her from domestic bondage.

She had not sat long at her work, when Egbert and Woodville came to the house, to inform her they were going upon a pleasurable excursion for the day to the park, with Miss Woodville and some other friends, and expected she would join the party, as the absence of her mother, they supposed, had left her at perfect liberty.

Jacintha immediately undeceived them; and they undertook to remove the obstacles to her going out, Woodville declaring his damsels should finish her task, and Egbert bribing the boys to silence.

Every thing being settled, Jacintha accompanied the gentlemen to the park, near the entrance of which Miss Woodville, with two other ladies and gentlemen, waited for them.

The whole party then proceeded to the river, where a pleasure-boat was prepared for their reception, into which they instantly stepped; and the gentlemen, exchanging their coats for nankeen jackets, alternately rowed and steered.

The day was delightfully fine; not a cloud veiled the blue vault of heaven; and only a soft breeze prevailed, sufficient to curl the water, and temper the intense heat of the air.

The most perfect harmony reigned among the party; and the enchanting prospects they every where beheld, added not a little to their pleasure.

The banks on one side consisted of level and luxuriant meadows, divided by hedge-row elms, and valleys green, scattered over with flocks and herds; and extending to a range of gently-swelling hills, watered by a thousand chrystal rivulets, fantastically fringed with trees, and planted with little groves, which admitted through their natural vistas, a view of the distant and aspiring mountains which bounded the horizon.

This soft and pastoral landscape, enlivened by groups of hay-makers, was finely contrasted by the pomp and grandeur of the opposite shore, where hills, or rather mountains, rose in bold and projecting majesty above the water, clothed to their very base with shades of ancient growth and solemn verdure. Amidst these woods labyrinthian avenues were cut, which led to all the enchantments of the place....the noble terraces, margined with flowering shrubs and choice parterres, the long cathedral walks, the romantic buildings, the velvet slopes, embroidered with such flowers

“ As Proserpina,  
 “ .....frighted, thou let'st fall  
 “ From Dis's waggon! daffodils  
 “ That come before the swallow dares, and take  
 “ The winds of *March* with beauty: violets dim:  
 “ But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
 “ Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,  
 “ That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
 “ Bright Phœbus in his strength:....  
 “ ..... gold ox-lips, and  
 “ The crown-imperial, lilies of all kinds,  
 “ The *fleur de lis* being one!

SHAKSPEARE.

Egbert, as well as his companions, frequently laid aside the oar, to take up the flute or hautboy, upon which he in particular played with exquisite taste and scientific skill; the ladies were not exempt from taking part in the concert,

“ And melting music stole upon the sky,  
 “ And soften'd sounds along the waters die.”

They rowed about till three o'clock, when the heat becoming intense, and the breeze which had refreshed them dying away, they gladly landed,

to shelter themselves amidst the embowering gloom of the mountains.

The place to which they repaired was a pavilion, midway up one of the most lofty of the ascents. It looked down upon the river, whose windings it commanded to a considerable extent, and which hereabouts was dotted with small islands of singular beauty; and upwards to a noble terrace, backed by the far-stretching walls of what appeared an ancient fabric, a miniature resemblance of the fortified castles of old. The grey walls were nearly covered with ivy, stone-croft, and moss; and above them rose a dark wood, too thick to permit the eye to penetrate beyond it, in search of any other beauties than those so profusely scattered around.

This building, which was intended more for ornament than use, was the residence of the boatman and his wife; and this was the only part of the domain to which any attention had been paid since the departure of lord Gwytherin; all the rest exhibiting wildness, confusion, and neglect.

The servants, who had followed from Woodville's, had prepared dinner against the landing of the party in the pavilion.

Jacintha had often contemplated the lovely prospect it commanded, but never before had she thought it so charming: for never had she viewed it with a mind so truly serene and happy as at the present moment.

'Tis strange, yet true, that according to our feelings, we behold external objects. By a kind of wonderful sympathy, it seems as if inanimate nature participated in our joys and griefs. When we are pleased, we think, as Milton says, that the earth gives sign of gratulation.... But when black melancholy sits within our souls,

" She round us throws

" A death-like silence, and a dread repose ;

" Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,

" Shades ev'ry flow'r, and darkens ev'ry green ;

" Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,

" And breathes a browner horror o'er the woods."

POPE.

The same good-humour and sprightliness, which had rendered the preceding part of the day so delightful, still prevailed ; and a more convivial party, than that now assembled in the pavilion, could no where, perhaps, have been found.

They did not quit it till the impurpling glow of evening was beginning to repose upon the landscape, and a gentle breeze had again sprung up, impregnated with the perfume of new-mown hay and wild flowers.

" They returned to the boat, and continued coasting about, " till twilight grey had in her sober mantle all things clad ;" the rowers often resting upon their oars, to listen to the breathings of a mellow horn from a neighbouring wood....

" By distance made more sweet,

" Which o'er the stream, with fond delay,

" Round an holy calm diffusing,

" Love of peace, and lonely musing,

" In hollow murmurs di'd away."

The refreshing coolness of the woods upon their landing, would have tempted them to prolong their ramble, had not Jacintha been anxious to return home on account of her mother.

" Oh ! how do I long," cried Egbert, softly whispering to her as she leaned upon his arm ; " Oh ! how do I long for the period which shall deliver you from this unpleasant restraint ! How

busily, how rapturously has my imagination been employed throughout the day, in picturing the felicity that will then be ours! Like the smooth stream upon which we have been gliding, I have said to myself, our lives will pass....calm, serene, unruffled."

"Heaven grant they may!" exclaimed Jacintha. "Happiness is, indeed, a little in arrears with us both, and I trust she will at length discharge her debt."

"Doubt it not," said Egbert.

"I do not," replied Jacintha. "'Tis by looking forward to future pleasures, I have been enabled to bear present ills....without hope, I fear none of us could boast of enduring spirits to support misfortunes."

Woodville, unwilling to separate at so early an hour, from the friends with whom he had spent so pleasant a day, proposed collecting a party at his house, and making up a dance;.... this was a proposal too agreeable not to be embraced; but as it was impossible to procure Jacintha's company without Mrs. Greville's and Gertrude's, it was settled that, as soon as they returned home, Woodville should go for them.

Jacintha quitted the party outside the park palings, and, accompanied by Egbert, directly proceeded home, where she was happy to find her mother not yet arrived. She put her bonnet and cloak out of the way, and desired Egbert to leave her; but he still lingered, and lingered, till at length the chaise with Mrs. Greville and Gertrude stopped at the door, so stuffed with bundles that it was an absolute labour to unpack them.

Mrs. Greville's real business to Chester was not, as she pretended to her husband, to buy

having yet forgot the "joys of his dancing days," much to the displeasure of his lady wife.

Mr. Greville also came in a little before supper, and was a delighted spectator of the amusement going on. In the happiness of his family, he found his own felicity ; and when he beheld content and gaiety sparkling in their eyes, he raised his own with gratitude to heaven, for thus giving pleasure to him and his ; and, by an evening of repose, rewarding the numerous troubles of his early day.

---

CHAP. VI.

---

“ He had been taught the art of courts,  
“ To gild a face with smiles, and leer a man to ruin.  
DYER.

---

LORD Gwytherin's approaching visit to his seat, created a general bustle throughout the village. All the inhabitants were desirous of attracting his notice, by appearing to the best advantage ; but their preparations were slight, compared to those which Mrs. Greville made, though in such a manner as could not engage the observation of her husband ; and her heart swelled with delight at the pleasures she anticipated.... She was somewhat mortified, however, on finding Mr. Greville absolutely determined not to let her pay a formal visit (which she had hinted to be her intention) to the ladies, who, she understood were to accompany lord Gwytherin to the castle.

“ Disproportioned acquaintances,” said he, “ are never pleasant ; and, besides, by attempting to put yourself on an equality with the society at the castle, which your visiting them would plainly demonstrate, you would expose yourself, in all probability, to ridicule and derision.”

“ Lord ! Mr. Greville,” said she, extremely vexed, and utterly unable to conceal her vexation, “ how you talk ! I really can't agree with you, in thinking there is such a mighty difference



between me and the company lord Gwytherin has invited ; and certainly we should give Gertrude a chance of being as well settled as Jacintha."

"Why, surely, my dear," exclaimed Mr. Greville, in some surprise, and looking earnestly at her, "'tis not amongst a set of fashionable, dissipated men of fortune, you would either seek, or expect to form a connexion for your daughter! Beware how you encourage such an idea, beware how you suffer it to take possession of Gertrude's mind: to such hopes, such projects, may often be attributed the destruction of innocence and domestic peace."

Mrs. Greville, anxious to do away the suspicion she had excited of her designs, lest, if retained, it should be the means of having them defeated, protested to her husband, he had quite mistaken her meaning ; and artfully changing the subject on which they were discoursing, resolved never again to renew it, but trust to chance to bring about an introduction to lord Gwytherin. This she felt the more inclined to do, in consequence of Woodville's declaring his intention of giving a ball shortly after the arrival of his lordship, to which entertainment she was convinced Mr. Greville would not attempt to prevent her going.

About the expected time, his lordship arrived, accompanied by a large and convivial party, composed of both sexes, and attended by a numerous and splendid retinue.

Within a few miles of the castle, he was met by a number of his tenants, who escorted him to it with pipes and tabors, bearing rural banners before him. The bells rang throughout the day; in the evening, the village blazed with bonfires; and as many of the inhabitants as pleased, were entertained at the Gwytherin arms at his expence.

Mrs. Greville and Gertrude now became all bustle and expectation; but forbore doing any thing to attract the notice of his lordship, or his party, though they frequently passed their house, until the night of Woodville's ball, for which cards were issued the very day after his arrival; deeming it better, since prevented from paying a ceremonious visit to the castle, by the obstinacy and queer notions of Greville, not to make their appearance to its fashionable inhabitants, till they should be dressed, as they hoped and believed, to the utmost advantage.

Time had neither effected a change in the disposition nor person of lord Gwytherin. He still retained all the profligacy of the one, and all the captivating graces of the other....graces which rendered but too successful his artifices and designs. So persuasive was his eloquence, so polished his manners, so brilliant his understanding, so universal his knowledge, so general his accomplishments, that it was utterly impossible to converse with him without being amused and instructed, and gradually losing that prejudice which his character inspired against him, or, rather, being led to believe it was a character he had not deserved. Thus formed to allure and to deceive; thus uniting to all those mental advantages, a most attractive appearance; for, to use the words of Milton,

“ His large fair front, and eye sublime, declar'd

“ Absolute rule,”

it could excite no surprise that lord Gwytherin found few unable to resist his wiles....wiles, which he was seldom without some temptation to practise. For, as he mastered others, so his passions mastered him; nor could any tie, however holy,

any confidence, however sacred, induce him to give up, if possible to obtain it, any thing which he thought could contribute to their gratification.

In the course of time, his fortune became materially injured by his dissipation and extravagance; and he at length determined upon a matrimonial connection, as the easiest method of retrieving it, notwithstanding the abhorrence he felt to part with even the shadow of his liberty: but desperate disorders must have desperate remedies, he considered.

In consequence of this determination he returned to England, from whence he had been absent many years. The gay and voluptuous manners of the continent being more consonant to his inclination, than the more sober and decorous customs of his own country.

In hopes of accelerating his scheme by such conduct, introducing himself again to the notice of the public with some degree of eclat, and completely deceiving it as to his real situation, he resolved on being more expensive than ever in his entertainments; and conceiving he could no where commence the career he meant to pursue, so well as at his own mansion, he accordingly repaired to it, bringing with him a chosen party, in whose society it was impossible to find the moments heavy;

“ In his train

“ Came mirth, that wrinkled care derides;

“ And laughter, holding both her sides.”

Amongst his lordship's guests were three or four young men, whom Egbert had known very intimately in London. Upon meeting at Wye-field, this intimacy was renewed with much pleasure on both sides; and an introduction taking

place between him and lord Gwytherin, he became a pretty constant visiter at the castle; the society there being too agreeable to permit him often to decline the invitations he received to it.

---

CHAP. VII.

---

“ As pirates all false colours wear,  
“ T’entrap th’unwary mariner;  
“ So women, to surprise us, spread  
“ The borrow’d flags of white and red:  
“ Lay trains of amorous intrigues,  
“ In tow’rs, and curls, and perriwigs.”

HUDIBRAS.

---

ON the day of Woodville’s ball, Egbert dined at the castle; from whence he went to it, accompanied by a large party, leaving lord Gwytherin, who made it a rule seldom to go to any amusement until a very late hour, behind, with several gay companions.

To describe the bustle and flutter of Mrs. Greville and Gertrude throughout this day, would be utterly impossible. On this important occasion, the former took from her chest a blue tabby, which had not been exhibited to public view for many years before. Her head, like Mrs Hardcastle’s was dressed after one in an old memorandum-book, by the village barber; and upon it she wore a small gauze cap, ornamented with red ribbon, which vied in brightness with the full-blown roses in her bosom. This cap, together with a fine furbelowed apron, treble ruffles, and laced handkerchief, she procured, as also Gertrude’s dress, from

a milliner at Chester, who assured her every thing was made up in the most fashionable style, and after the newest patterns from London.

Gertrude's dress consisted of a deep yellow, or rather Aurora coloured muslin, vandyked with purple, and confined to her waist by a sash of the same colour, which, like the gown itself, trailed to an immense length upon the ground. Her hair was loaded with a profusion of feathers and flowers; and in her bosom she wore a very large *bouquet* of hot-house plants, obtained from the gardener at the park.

Jacintha, who had neither the power nor inclination to make herself as ridiculous as her mother and sister, and who felt greatly hurt at the idea of the remarks she was confident they would excite, was simply habited in a white muslin robe; her bright and redundant hair merely ornamented with a light wreath of artificial flowers, and her fair neck adorned with a chain of pearls, the gift of Egbert.

But lovely as she looked, Mrs. Greville did not entertain many fears of her eclipsing Gertrude this evening: so greatly did she think the charms of the latter heightened by the style in which she was dressed.

Both she and Gertrude wisely forbore giving a complete finishing to their dress, till Mr. Greville went out to take his customary evening's walk; certain it would not have met his approbation, and scarcely less certain that he would either have insisted upon their changing it, or continuing at home. By this manœuvre they were detained till a late hour, so that most of the company were assembled before they reached Woodville's. On entering the house, to which they went in his

chaise, though but a few yards from their own, Mrs. Greville having requested it, lest her dress or Gertrude's should be discomposed by walking to it, the numerous attendants, the brilliancy of the lights, the bustle below, and the confusion of voices from above, increased the flutter of Mrs. Greville's spirits to such a degree, that she could scarcely breathe; and on reaching the ball-room, was obliged to pause for a minute, to try to recover her composure; then assuming the most graceful carriage she could command, she made her *entrée*.

The party whom Egbert had accompanied from the castle, and among whom he was now standing, were instantly attracted by her appearance and Gertrude's. A kind of stifled laughter prevailed for some minutes, followed by remarks not very pleasing to the ear of Egbert; for though he neither esteemed Mrs. Greville nor Gertrude, he felt hurt at hearing such near connections of Jacintha's turned into ridicule; and had she exposed herself to similar derision, by dressing as they had done, he neither would nor could have refrained from expressing his displeasure.

The ladies having satisfied their curiosity as to Mrs. Greville's situation in life, again laughed, and protested she answered exactly the ideas they had formed of a country parson's wife.

"What immense pains the poor woman has taken to make herself ridiculous!" said one. "I dare say her husband never took more to compose a sermon."

"Nor ever felt more satisfied with his work when finished, than she appears to be with herself!" cried a second. "It may be amusing to have her brought to the castle; I'll certainly desire my lord to invite her thither."

"But the daughter is still more absurd!" exclaimed a third. "The girl must undoubtedly have sketched that dress while watching the performance of some strolling actress in a barn. I wish some one would prevail upon her to dance a minute, that she might fully exhibit herself to the whole company."

Jacintha did not entirely escape their satirical remarks....remarks which were in a great measure provoked by the eulogiums bestowed upon her by the gentlemen.

The simplicity of her dress they imputed to affectation, not to taste; for how was it possible to suppose a girl brought up in obscurity as she was, could possess any elegant ideas? Nay, it was obvious, from the rusticity of her appearance, notwithstanding her efforts to seem easy and unembarrassed; that she did not.

Not more unconscious of deserving, than unsuspecting of the ridicule she excited, Mrs. Greville proceeded nearly to the top of the room, paying her compliments as she passed, in a very ceremonious manner, to such of the company as she knew; hoping, by an exact adherence to all the rules of what she considered punctilio and good breeding, to convince the fashionable folks she knew something of life, and was not utterly unworthy of their notice.

Having seated herself, and a little recovered from the flutter caused by her entrance, she cast her eyes round the assembly, and a cloud instantly overspread her countenance at finding Lord Gwytherin was not present; this, however, was soon dispelled by Miss Woodville's informing her that he was expected in the course of the evening.



The ball was opened by Egbert and Miss Woodville. The heart of Mrs. Greville again began to beat with redoubled violence, as the gentlemen began to choose their partners; at length, to her inexpressible pleasure, she saw a young officer, a visiter of lord Gwytherin's, approach Gertrude, and take her out; and, almost at the same moment, the hand of Jacintha was requested by a young baronet, also a guest at the castle, though the least agreeable of the party assembled there.

Vain, arrogant, and self-conceited, he thought himself entitled to universal homage from his rank and fortune, and to universal admiration from his personal accomplishments. Few women, he believed, could resist the united attractions he imagined he possessed; and he had not a doubt of making an easy conquest of the heart of Jacintha, whose beauty had fixed his attention the moment she entered the room, and to whom he resolved to attach himself throughout the evening; pleasing himself with the idea of the envy he should excite, by engrossing to himself the prettiest girl in the assembly, and, perhaps, bearing her off, at some future period, in triumph from her native plains.

He pictured to his imagination the flutter into which the attentions of a man of his consequence could not fail of throwing a girl unaccustomed, as he concluded she had ever been, to any thing like brilliant society; and also the soft confusion, the bashful simplicity, with which she would receive his compliments, and betray the admiration he inspired.

Full of these ideas, his disappointment was extreme when, after very little conversation, he perceived that she was neither elated by his notice,

nor delighted with his attentions ; neither overwhelmed with confusion at his compliments, nor unable to reply to them with spirit ; and that though brought up in the country, she had not been brought up in rusticity. On making this discovery, he assumed a still greater degree of affability than he had done before, in order to melt, instead of awe her into admiration, as he had at first intended.

By degrees he became so extremely troublesome, so free in his discourse, extravagant in his compliments, and presuming in his looks, that Jacintha sincerely repented having stood up with him, though, by refusing to do so, she should have been compelled to sit the whole evening ; and resolved to leave him the moment the dance was over. This she accordingly did, but without being able to get rid of him ; for, hastily following her, he placed himself at her feet, since he could not procure a seat by her on the bench she partly occupied, declaring it was a situation which monarchs might envy, and desiring her to consider herself engaged to him for the third set.

“ Indeed I shall consider no such thing,” replied Jacintha.

“ You know the penalty then,” said he. “ As I have asked you to dance, you must either accept my hand, or sit the remainder of the evening ; and, upon my soul, I would much rather you would do the latter, as I should then have a better opportunity of *breathing* the sentiments you have inspired.”

Confused and provoked by his behaviour, which attracted general observation, Jacintha rose, and desired him to let her pass ; but this he absolutely refused, and, to her infinite vexation, she was compelled to resume her seat. From this disa-

greeable situation she was soon delivered by Egbert. The conduct of the baronet during the dance, no more than at the present moment, had escaped his notice, and the instant he led his partner to a seat, he hastened to Jacintha; and pushing him, not very gently, out of the way with his foot, he took her hand, and conducted her to another part of the room.

Exasperated by this treatment, the baronet at first resolved on following Egbert, and demanding satisfaction for it; but suddenly reflecting, that any noise about a little insignificant country girl would be highly derogatory to a man of his consequence, he dropped this design, and formed the less dangerous determination of revenging himself upon Jacintha, by tormenting her to the utmost of his power; and against whom he felt the highest degree of spite and malice, in consequence of the severe mortification she had given to his pride and vanity, by the contempt and dislike she had manifested, contrary to his hopes and expectations, at his assiduities.

This resolution he had no opportunity of putting into practice till about the beginning of the third set; Egbert having danced with her the second, and continued with her till the gentlemen were again called upon to rise. But no sooner had he quitted her, than the baronet, who had watched all his motions from an inner room, darted into his vacant seat; and at the same instant a gentleman approached to request Jacintha's hand. Jacintha gave it without hesitation; but, as she was rising, the baronet caught hold of her gown, and told her she was already engaged.

"Engaged, Sir!" repeated Jacintha, much surprised; "to whom, pray?"

"To me; and you either dance or sit with me the remainder of the evening."

"I will neither do one nor the other," replied Jacintha, indignantly.

"Just as you please; but positively you shan't dance with any one but me."

The gentleman who still retained her hand, now began to remonstrate, but without effect; and Jacintha, fearful of the consequences that might ensue from an altercation which the baronet seemed so enclined to encourage, at last begged him to excuse her, as she did not mean to dance any more that evening; upon which, after some polite expressions of regret, he went to seek another partner.

Extremely provoked, Jacintha would now have left her seat, but was still prevented by the baronet, who, seizing her hand, swore she should not quit him. She was remonstrating with him on the rudeness of his conduct, when Egbert, who still contrived to keep a watchful eye upon her, perceiving how she was situated, apologized to his partner for leaving her for a minute, and approaching Jacintha, inquired the reason she did not dance, as he had heard Mr. Cresfield requesting her hand?

"Because she is better engaged," exclaimed the baronet.

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Egbert, fiercely.

Here Jacintha hastily interposed, to prevent a reply, which she dreaded might be productive of unpleasant consequences, and said a head-ache had prevented her dancing with Mr. Cresfield.

"Then, I hope, cried Egbert, who at this moment received a summons to his partner (casting

a look of indignation at the baronet as he spoke), "you'll choose another situation than your present one."

Jacintha assured him she would, and accordingly started from her seat at the instant he was turning from her; and going directly to her mother, declared her intention of departing, if it met with her approbation, assigning as her reasons for doing so, the fears she entertained of some disagreeable altercation taking place between Egbert and the baronet, if she continued much longer in the room, as she perceived the latter was determined to tease her.

Mrs. Greville protested she was quite right in her intention of leaving the assembly. She was, indeed, not a little delighted at the idea of her quitting it before the entrance of lord Gwytherin; still dreading the power of her charms, notwithstanding the high opinion she entertained of Gertrude's.

Jacintha accordingly left the room without being observed by the baronet, whom some gentlemen stopped to speak to, as he was following her.

---

CHAP. VIII.

---

“ He saw her charming.”

THOMSON.

---

**J**UST as Jacintha had descended to the hall, congratulating herself upon having thought of an expedient for preventing any quarrel between Egbert and the baronet, yet highly provoked at being compelled to give up an agreeable amusement by the impertinence of a coxcomb, lord Gwytherin and his party entered. Jacintha stepped aside; and the gentlemen, lord Gwytherin excepted, rushed tumultuously up the stairs without perceiving her, eager to partake of the gaiety which was going forward; he alone remained behind his companions to give some directions to a servant; and as he was then following them, the figure of Jacintha caught his eye, and he directly paused to gaze in silent admiration upon her. Confused by his ardent gaze, Jacintha averted her head; and his lordship recovering from the surprise which the unexpected sight of so lovely an object had caused, approached her with that insinuating smile which he knew so well how to assume, and which he had so often found resistless, and said he hoped he was not so unfortunate as to enter the house at the very moment she was quitting it.

Jacintha bowed, but made no reply; and perceiving his lordship about addressing her again, she hastily turned into an adjoining apartment, where the house-keeper and some other female servants were giving out refreshments; and gently closing the door, resolved on waiting there until he had left the hall.

He lingered for some minutes in it, in hopes of her coming out, during which he made many minute inquiries of one of Woodville's servants concerning her; and was delighted to find her situation in life was such as, he flattered himself, would be favourable to any designs he might form against her. Full of her idea, he ascended to the ball-room, and having taken a general survey of the company, and a few turns about the room, he seated himself by lady Levally, one of his visitors, a lady more distinguished for beauty and wit, than virtue or decorum. From her satirical remarks upon the assembly, he expected to derive much amusement; nor was he mistaken. His attention, however, was not entirely fixed, until she began to speak of Mrs. Greville. At the sound of this name, his eyes eagerly pursued the direction of her ladyship's; and having fully convinced himself the whimsical figure he gazed upon was the mother of his new divinity, he resolved on losing no time in introducing himself to her notice.

"Bellamy," exclaimed her ladyship, "has made himself quite ridiculous with one of the daughters," pointing, as she spoke, to the spot where he stood flirting with Gertrude; "and Ashton not less so with the other. She did not seem, however, to relish his attentions quite so much as her sister has done those of the captain, from a dread, I suppose, of exciting the jealousy of Oswald, to whom,

Understand from Miss Woodville, she is engaged, and to be united as soon as he is of age. 'Tis really astonishing a young man of his birth and fashion should sequester himself in such a little obscure village as this, or think of connecting himself in such a manner."

"The girl is exquisitely beautiful!" cried his lordship, with involuntary warmth, and utterly forgetful of the rule he laid down....never to praise one woman to another, from the illiberal ideas he entertained of the sex.

"Why, pray, where did you see her?" asked lady Levally with a disconcerted air, and violently flirting her fan.

His lordship satisfied her on this head; and her ladyship allowed the girl was pretty well, vainly trying to hide the chagrin which his warm encomium upon her had occasioned..." But she wants grace, she wants ease, she wants the polish of high life," added she.

"True" said lord Gwytherin (rising as he spoke), "those nameless elegancies which adorn lady Levally, and so eminently distinguish *her* from the rest of her sex; but where can we hope to find another perfect as *she* is?"

With a smile and a bow he then left her, and proceeded to Mrs. Greville, who still continued in the seat she had occupied on first entering the room, watching every gesture, every look of Gertrude's, and those which were directed towards her.

Lord Gwytherin easily procured a seat beside her, and with the same facility entered into conversation. The ecstasy, the triumph of Mrs Greville at this instant cannot be described; she smiled, she bowed, she blushed, and looked round the room.



to see whether the company observed the honour which was done her ; without which, the pleasure it gave her, would have been incomplete.

Not more skilled in turning the foibles of mankind to his own advantage, than in discerning them, lord Gwytherin soon discovered the ruling passions of Mrs. Greville, and regulated his words and actions accordingly, trusting the favour of the mother would ensure in some degree that of the daughter.

After some general discourse, he suddenly paused ; and after looking some minutes at the dancers, begged to know whether Mrs. Greville could inform him who the elegant girl was that had just then commenced the dance ?

“ Who, where ? ” eagerly demanded Mrs. Greville, following the direction of his eye.

“ I mean the young lady in yellow,” replied his lordship.

“ Oh, my lord ! ” cried Mrs. Greville, “ you make me proud.”

“ What, is that young lady any relation of your’s ? Ah ! now I see how it is,” continued he, looking with pretended earnestness at Gertrude, and then at her mother ; “ I see the strong resemblance. Oh, madam ! what a happy woman you should consider yourself, in being the mother of so lovely a creature ! ”

“ I protest, my lord,” exclaimed the enraptured Mrs. Greville, “ you are quite too polite ; your praises of my girl will really make me vain.”

“ You wrong your good sense in saying so, my dear madam,” replied his lordship ; “ vanity and you, I am convinced, will ever remain strangers to each other.”

In this strain of flattery he continued to pay his court to Mrs. Greville. Not in the least degree

scrupulous or intimidated from persevering in his designs upon Jacintha, from hearing of the engagement between her and Egbert, having often dissolved engagements more sacred than any now existing between them, and surmounted difficulties more perplexing than any now presented to his view by this circumstance.

He dexterously drew from Mrs. Greville every particular he wished to know respecting her family, and also the cause of Jacintha's quitting the ball, whom he acknowledged having met in the hall (before any of the rest of the company), but whom he ceased to praise, on finding his eulogiums were received by Mrs. Greville with every mark of coldness and disapprobation ; thus silencing the sudden alarm they had given her, and still suffering her to believe he was the captive of Gertrude. He expressed his regret at not having sooner known his vicinity to so charming, so amiable, so interesting a family as her's, and declared his intention of paying his compliments to her the next morning. "How highly delighted should I feel," said he, "if I could flatter myself that the intimacy I then hope to commence, would be attended with reciprocal pleasure !"

The first opportunity that offered, Mrs. Greville beckoned Gertrude to her, in order to introduce her to his lordship ; a ceremony he would very readily have dispensed with, as he felt it quite a sufficient task to flatter Mrs. Greville herself.

Captain Bellamy, however, to his infinite satisfaction, rendered any great exertion of politeness, on his part, to Gertrude, unnecessary, by the very great attention which he paid her. This young officer, being quite a stage-struck hero, could make love, and pay compliments, in the most tender,

sentimental, and sublime style imaginable, with very little trouble to himself, and to the very great delight, and oftentimes surprise, of young ladies, who, like Gertrude, were not extremely well read; and, consequently, ascribed the eloquence which charmed them, to the talents, and not to the memory of their lover.

Lord Gwytherin completed the farce he was acting, by handing Mrs. Greville to the supper-room; seating himself beside her, and devoting almost his whole attention to her, to the great amusement of some of the party, who fancied he was merely quizzing the curate's wife. He insisted on setting her and Gertrude down in his own coach, and left them the most elated and happy of their sex. In dreams of bliss they passed the remainder of the night, or rather, early part of the morning; as "the lark, the herald of the day," had long begun to proclaim its approach ere they returned home.

Jacintha, having retired to rest nearly at the usual time, was consequently able to rise at the accustomed hour next morning. On descending to the breakfast parlour she found her father there, and was almost immediately joined by Egbert, whose anxiety to learn the real cause of her quitting the assembly (which he imputed to the conduct of the baronet, and not the cause assigned by Mrs. Greville), would not permit him to enjoy any repose, though he had staid out as late as the rest of the party.

Jacintha evaded all his inquiries; and finding them useless, he at length desisted from them; but with a passionate declaration to watch the baronet, and chastise him upon the smallest provocation.

"I hope," said Mr. Greville, "the propriety of Jacintha's conduct will ever repel impertinence in that of any other person. I have ever thought that it is by the behaviour of a woman our sex regulate their's to her."

"Yes," replied Egbert, warmly, "except when she meets with fools and coxcombs."

"True," said Mr. Greville. "The seldomer, therefore, females of modesty mix in societies where they are liable to encounter such beings, the better."

He then desired Jacintha to make breakfast, as he did not suppose her mother or sister would rise for some time.

"Such are the effects of dissipation," said he. "It deprives its votaries of the power of enjoying the *real* pleasures of life, the loveliest charms of nature, the sweets of early day,

"When every muse,  
"And every blooming pleasure wait without,  
"To bless the wildly devious morning walk."

From their feverish couch, their wild and distempered dreams, they rise, when, perhaps, half the day is over, pale, languid, and unrefreshed. How different in feelings, how different in appearance, from those, who obey

"The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,"  
and taste its verdure!"

Egbert, who was in the habit of

"Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
"To meet the sun upon the upland lawn,"

acknowledged the justness of what he said. Greville made some inquiries concerning the ball; and, among other questions, asked Jacintha whether she had seen lord Gwytherin?

"For an instant," she replied.

Mrs. Greville and Gertrude made their appearance sooner than was expected; but lord Gwytherin's promised visit had made them rise earlier than they would otherwise have done, in order to prepare for it.

They had scarcely entered the parlour, when one of his lordship's servants appeared, with cards, inviting Mr. Greville, the ladies, and Egbert, that evening to the castle.

"I am sure," said Mr. Greville, as his wife read their card aloud, "'tis an invitation I will not accept: and I hope, my dear, you don't intend to do so."

"Indeed, my dear, but I do," replied she; "that is," softening the peremptory tone in which she at first spoke, "if you will permit me. I imagined you had no objection to my visiting at the castle, provided, which you see is the case, the first advances for an intimacy came from thence."

"Indeed I have an objection," said Mr. Greville; "but since you seem so bent upon going this evening, I shall not prevent you, upon conditions that you do not stay out late, nor encourage any ideas of an intimacy with the fashionable folks at the castle; they are not by any means the kind of acquaintance I should choose for you and the girls."

"No, I suppose not," muttered Gertrude, with a dissatisfied air; "'tis only with the old-fashioned humdrum folks of the village, you would wish to have us acquainted."

Mrs. Greville readily subscribed to the conditions of her husband, promising to do whatever he wished; but, like many other people, promising what she never meant to perform.

The good man, soon after, withdrew to his study, where the boys waited to receive their daily lesson.

Mrs. Greville and Gertrude then began to speak, without restraint, of all that had passed the preceding evening. In the midst of this (to them) most delectable conversation, lord Gwytherin entered. On his appearance their hearts fluttered, their cheeks glowed, they looked in the glass, and then exultingly at each other.

He apologized for coming at so early an hour; feared he had intruded upon them; but declared he found it utterly impossible to delay another moment paying his compliments.

Mrs. Greville curtsied and simpered; and his lordship having taken the chair which she offered him at the breakfast-table, accepted from the fair hand of Gertrude a cup of tea; glad of any pretext for lengthening his visit, in hopes of being able, in the course of it, to attract the regard of Jacintha, who appeared this morning still more beautiful than the preceding evening.

To gain her, he thought no difficulty too great or painful to undergo. He saw, however, that he must act with the greatest caution, not only on account of her lover, but her mother; and that ere he deceived her, he must deceive them; but to all this he thought himself fully equal; nor had he any doubt of completely triumphing over Egbert.

After seducing the tender and once faithful wife from the arms of an adoring husband....after estranging the doting and once exemplary mother from a family of helpless innocents (and these enormities he had committed), he could not think it would be a very difficult matter to detach the heart of a young inexperienced girl from her

lover ; nor did he feel the least degree of remorse at the idea of the bright prospect of felicity he should blast by such a measure, or the smallest compunction at the idea of

“ Cropping this fair rose,  
“ To rifle all its sweetness ; then cast it  
“ Like a loathsome weed, away.”

But though, in pursuance of this resolution not to pay Jacintha any attention till he could do so unobserved, he commanded his words, he could not controul his eyes, nor forbear directing some glances at her, which heightened her colour, and disconcerted Egbert, who felt extremely pleased when his lordship departed, and still more pleased when Jacintha declared it would be disagreeable to her to go to the castle that evening ; a declaration which proceeded from her fears of again meeting the baronet, lest she should experience some impertinence from him, which could not fail of provoking the impetuous temper of Egbert. Her mother, as she imagined, did not attempt to oppose her inclination to stay at home ; on the contrary, she could not conceal the pleasure it gave her. Egbert now mentioned his intention also of sending an excuse ; but Mrs. Greville so earnestly importuned him to chaperon her and Gertrude, in this their first visit to the castle, that he was compelled, most reluctantly, to give it up.

Mr. Greville luckily dined abroad this day ; so that Mrs. Greville and her daughter had again an opportunity of decorating their persons according to their own taste. They made themselves, therefore, quite as ridiculous as they had done the preceding evening, notwithstanding a hint

upon the subject from Egbert ; but self-conceit was a governing principle with both.

In the course of the day, captain Bellamy called at the house ; and Mrs. Greville was somewhat alarmed by Gertrude's confessing she thought him the most charming of men. Her alarm, however, was transient, as Gertrude, after a short pause, added, with the most languishing air imaginable, her eyes all the time fastened upon the glass, that though the secret sigh of her soul must ever be breathed for him, she would not be so great an enemy to the interests of her family, as to discourage the attentions of lord Gwytherin.

About seven his lordship's coach came for the ladies ; and Jacintha, on being left to herself, retired with a book, into an inner parlour, which opened into the garden.

Here she had read some time ; and was deeply engaged in a very interesting story, when a slow and cautious step behind her made her hastily turn round, and to her unutterable astonishment she beheld lord Gwytherin.

His lordship could not resist making use of the opportunity, which the absence of her lover and mother gave him, of addressing her as he wished. The idea of the advantages he might derive from it, completely reconciled him to her not coming to the castle, as he had at first hoped and expected, since even there he did not think he could have found so favourable a one for disclosing his sentiments. He accordingly contrived to leave his company without exciting any observation, and hastened to her by a private path, furnished with a plausible excuse for doing so, if her father should be at home.



Jacintha, starting up, dropped her book, and stood gazing at him, almost without power to speak or move.

"I fear, miss Greville," said he, advancing to her, "I have alarmed you."

"No, my lord, only surprised me," replied Jacintha, a little recovered from the disorder into which his unexpected appearance had thrown her; but without offering him a chair, as she neither liked his visit, nor wished him to continue a moment with her.

"I am come," said he, taking her hand ere she was aware of his design, "to reproach you for your cruelty in not coming to the castle. Surely, if my eyes hold any correspondence with my heart, they must have told you I lived but in hopes of seeing you again."

Jacintha, without seeming to notice these last words, thanked him for the obliging solicitude he expressed for her company; and believing, or at least affecting to believe, that he merely came for the purpose of bringing her to the castle, assured him it was not in her power to go out that evening, and therefore begged she might no longer detain him.

"Detain me!" repeated he, with all that warmth so natural to him, all that insinuation he could so readily assume. "Oh, would to heaven you would permit me to devote not only this, but every succeeding hour of my life to you! Oh, where, with whom could they be spent so rapturously?"

"I am not accustomed to such complimentary language, my lord," cried Jacintha, "and perhaps on that account, do not greatly admire it."

"Complimentary, do you call it?" exclaimed he. "Heavens, what a term for such language as mine! language which

"Breathes what love inspires,  
"Warm from the soul, and true to all its fires;"

language which cannot speak, which cannot paint half the admiration, half the adoration with which you have inspired me! Never was I so charmed, never was I so enamoured. But at this I cannot wonder, for never before did I behold such consummate beauty, such matchless perfection."

"This is going too far, my lord," cried Jacintha. "I really cannot permit you to amuse yourself at my expence any longer. You must allow me to tell you, I have neither the folly nor simplicity which I am confident you impute to me, or you would not address me in such a manner."

"Good heaven, how you injure yourself and me by such a supposition! I swear by all that is sacred, I speak but what I feel, but what I think. Your image, your idea, have occupied my whole heart from the first instant I beheld you; and if you do not relax a little from this coldness, this severity, I shall become the most wretched of men!"

"I must insist, my lord," said Jacintha, vainly endeavouring to withdraw her hand, "on your desisting from such language; and excuse me for telling you, that, considering the difference in our situations, your present conduct appears like presumption to me."

"Does this look like presumption?" cried he, sinking on his knees before her. "Oh, miss Greville! could you read my heart, you would find that, though I aspire to your favour, 'tis with lowliness, with respect!"

"My lord," said Jacintha, whose rising colour evinced her displeasure almost as forcibly as her words, "I must plainly inform you, you cannot alledge any thing which can either excuse or render your present conduct agreeable to me; and positively, either your lordship or I must quit this room immediately."

He was beginning to remonstrate, when a sudden stop was put to his eloquence by the entrance of Mrs. Greville.

She had lost all her money at a whist-table, where she had hoped to come off as triumphant as she generally did at her own house, and the houses of her neighbours; but she had now to do with people infinitely more experienced in the arts of the game, than either she, or those she was accustomed to play with, and consequently was compelled to pay a handsome tribute to their superior skill. She lost, however, with a good grace; and lady Levally, who was mistress of the ceremonies, or rather revèls, at the castle, having intimated to her that she expected her to cut in again, she invented a pretext for getting home, in order to replenish her purse from a private hoard she kept for her own use and Gertrude's, unwilling, or unable to find an opportunity of borrowing from Egbert, who was engaged with a large party in the music-room.

Lord Gwytherin hastily rose, upon her entrance, in manifest confusion; and Jacintha, the instant she regained her liberty, ran out of the room, too much provoked with his lordship, to continue another moment in his company.

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed Mrs. Greville, as soon as the violent shock she had received from beholding the destruction of all her hopes,

her airy castles ; for it was now too evident that Jacintha had made that conquest, which she had flattered herself the charms of Gertrude had effected. " Well, to be sure !" said she, as soon as it would permit her to speak, looking all the time at lord Gwytherin, " I never should have thought of such a thing."

" I am extremely surprised," cried lord Gwytherin, who by this time had recovered from his embarrassment, and who always made it a rule to confess when he could not deny ; " I am extremely surprised, madam, to hear you say so. I imagined a lady of your penetration would at once have perceived the impression your lovely daughter made upon me."

" I perceive it, my lord !" cried Mrs. Greville, her face all over scarlet, and fanning herself with violence ; " I perceive it ! No, indeed, I had no *idea* of such a thing ; and I hope, my lord, you have not gone and talked a heap of extravagant speeches to the girl, to turn her brain."

" Ah, madam !" said he, with a melancholy air, " I fear I can neither affect her head nor her heart, except indeed I may hope to obtain your interest."

" My interest !" repeated Mrs. Greville, seating herself, in an agitation she could not hide ; " my interest, my lord !" and she suddenly began to muse.

She clearly perceived that every hope of obtaining him for Gertrude was at an end : and she began to reconcile herself to their disappointment, by reflecting, that his passion for Jacintha might, if not opposed, lead to an event which would afford her scarcely less pleasure than she should

have derived from his union with Gertrude, namely, the destruction of Jacintha.

With the libertinism of his character, the perseverance of his disposition, the insinuation of his manners, she was well acquainted ; and from all these circumstances she could scarcely doubt, that if allowed to carry on his machinations against Jacintha, he would, from her youth, and consequent inexperience, notwithstanding her purity, and attachment for Egbert, ultimately entangle her in his snares. Delighted at even the remote idea of her destruction, at the idea of removing from her daughter a person who so continually, and so completely counteracted all the designs she formed for her, she resolved on forwarding to the utmost of her power, the schemes of lord Gwytherin, which, she was well aware, were of the most dishonourable nature ; in such a manner, however, as should prevent him from thinking she had a suspicion of their being so.

Her passion, entirely subdued by her deliberations, and the resolution she had formed in consequence of them, she looked up with a smiling countenance, and said, " I am sure, my lord, I should be very happy to do any thing to oblige your lordship ; but indeed I have very little influence with my eldest daughter ; besides, there is some kind of a foolish attachment subsisting between her and Mr. Oswald. However, all I can do, I will do ; as I am confident your views are honourable, and that if you once gain her heart, you'll declare yourself to her father."

" Doubt it not," cried lord Gwytherin, in a transport. " By all the saints, I swear to...."

"Hold, my lord!" interrupted Mrs. Greville; "from the opinion I entertain of your lordship, protestations are to me unnecessary."

"And you promise to do all in your power to serve me with your angelic daughter?"

"All," said Mrs. Greville.

"Thus let me thank you then!" he exclaimed, kissing her hand with as much transport as, perhaps, at that moment, he would have kissed the hand of Jacintha: and at the same time forcing upon her finger a very fine brilliant and valuable diamond ring, taken from his own for that purpose.

Mrs. Greville now hurried him back to the castle, lest her husband should surprise them together.

Though she faithfully kept the promise she had made him, and endeavoured as much as possible to throw Jacintha in his way, he could scarcely ever procure an opportunity of conversing with her. Whenever such an opportunity did occur, he made the best use of it; but, to his infinite mortification, without being able to effect the least alteration in Jacintha's conduct, who, upon all occasions, treated him with the most frigid coldness and indifference. This behaviour, however, instead of checking his designs, or abating his passion, rather increased the one, and rendered him more resolute and persevering in the other.

The subject upon which he conversed with her, as well as his visit, was carefully concealed by Jacintha from Egbert; but his own observation partly discovered what she would have hidden, and he frequently inquired what lord Gwytherin said to her. Those inquiries she constantly

evaded, though it required the utmost address to do so ; but she well knew that the smallest hint of his lordship's avowed attachment to her, could not fail of exasperating Egbert, and would in all probability be attended with the most unpleasant consequences ; as he had frequently declared, that, as their mutual engagement was publicly known, he should consider the man, who now addressed her upon any tender subject, guilty of as great a breach of honour and decorum, as if she was his wife.

A month passed away, without lord Gwytherin's perceiving himself in any degree rewarded for his attentions to Jacintha. His patience being now nearly exhausted, he determined on calling stratagem to his aid ; he accordingly issued invitations for an entertainment, which, upon his arrival at the park, he had promised to give in a very short time to his tenantry, and all the families of any consequence or respectability in the vicinity of the castle.

This entertainment was to consist of a feast to the tenants, and a sumptuous breakfast and dinner to his own party, with a masquerade in the evening.

The Grevilles were among the first who received an invitation ; but to the unspeakable mortification of the female part of the family, Jacintha not excepted, Mr. Greville absolutely protested against their accepting it. Such scenes of luxury and dissipation, he did not think by any means calculated to improve the minds of his daughters.... Besides, he had long meditated breaking the intimacy which had taken place between his family and the inhabitants of the castle, to his very great annoyance, and, as he dreaded, their very

great prejudice: and he thought he could not have a better opportunity than the present, for beginning to put this design into execution.... Tears, prayers, and expostulations, were therefore unavailing; and Mrs. Greville found, that whenever she did rule her husband, it was only when his reason was on her side.



## CHAP. IX.

" Come to the banquet all,  
" And revel out the day....'tis my command ;  
" Gay as the Persian god ourself will stand,  
" With a crown'd goblet in our lifted hand ;  
" While antic measures beat the burden'd ground,  
" And to the vaulted skies our clangors sound."

LEE'S ALEXANDER.

THE mortification which lord Gwytherin experienced, on first hearing of Mr. Greville's absolute prohibition against any of the female part of his family accepting the invitation to the *fête*, was by no means inferior to that which they themselves felt in consequence of it; but his brain was fertile in expedients, and he soon contrived a scheme which promised fair to prevent his being ultimately disappointed by the obstinacy of the curate.

On the day of the entertainment, Mrs. Greville and Gertrude shut themselves up in utter disconsolation; nor could any endeavours on the part of Mr. Greville re-animate, or restore them to good humour.

Egbert accompanied the Woodvilles to the park. The company met in a superb pavilion erected upon the edge of the water, and amused themselves till dinner-time by viewing the rustic

sports of the tenantry, who were assembled in the opposite meadows, where they feasted in spacious tents gaily decorated; and in the evening commenced dancing, to the rural sound of the pipe and tabor.

No art or expence that could contribute to render this entertainment delightful, had been spared: the fame of it lord Gwytherin trusted, nay, determined, should reach every part of the kingdom, not doubting it would accelerate his matrimonial project, in which he still persevered, notwithstanding his passion for Jacintha.

The dinner, of the most luxurious kind, was served up with the most costly magnificence, in the banqueting room of the castle, the Gothic decorations of which added considerably to the splendour of the feast; music re-echoed through the vaulted roof, and

“ With wassail, mirth, and revelry,

“ The castle rung around.”

At a late hour the company separated to prepare for the masquerade. In the interim, some young men, desirous of amusing themselves with the simplicity and astonishment of the country people, disguised themselves, and went into the village. Among these was an Autolicus, who excited much mirth by his pleasantry, and still greater satisfaction by a generous distribution of his wares. After parading about some time, he approached the house of Greville, and soon attracted Jacintha and Gertrude to the window, notwithstanding the ill-humour of the latter. On their approaching it, he displayed the contents of his basket, inviting them to purchase. Whilst Gertrude was pretending to make bargains, he slyly touched the hand of

Jacintha, and slipped a folded paper into it. As to nished by this action, and still more by the significant glance which accompanied it, Jacintha knew neither what to think, nor what to do. Her mother at this moment coming forward, she retreated from the window, and casting her eyes upon the paper, perceived it directed to herself, in what appeared the writing of Egbert. She could no longer hesitate to examine it, and eagerly opening it, read as follows :

“ DEAR JACINTHA,

“ The ardent desire you expressed to witness the entertainment of this evening, has induced me to procure you a dress for the purpose. Do not hesitate to make use of it; if you do, I shall be inexpressibly disappointed, as I have proposed to myself the highest pleasure from your company; and beholding the delight and surprise with which a scene so brilliant and so new, cannot fail of inspiring you. I would have returned to the house, in order to remove any scruples that you may, perhaps, feel against coming out, but that I feared my real motives for doing so would be suspected, and consequently my wishes frustrated, as your father could not grant that permission to you, which he refused to your mother and sister. As there cannot, however, be even the shadow of impropriety in putting yourself under my protection, I shall certainly expect you. Arrange matters with the servant, so that she may let you in; and as soon as the family have retired to rest, make the best of your way to the chesnut-walk, about the middle of which, you may depend on meeting

“ E. OSWALD.”

Jacintha felt highly delighted at this attention from Egbert, and extremely pleased at the idea of having her curiosity gratified. At the appointed hour she repaired to the garden, where she found the promised bundle, which she directly carried to her chamber without being observed, and there examining it, found it contained a long black silk domino, a mask, and a Spanish hat. She then spoke to the maid about sitting up for her, though not without very great reluctance, as she could not help reflecting, notwithstanding her situation respecting Egbert, that she was not acting right in going, even with him, to any place prohibited by her father; and as this reflection became every hour stronger, she would, in all probability, have relinquished the design entirely, but for the unwillingness she felt to disappoint Egbert, whose heart, by his letter, seemed set upon her company.

As soon as she had reason to think the family were at rest, she equipped herself in the masquerade habit; and stealing down, with a light foot, but a trembling heart, was let out by Gillian.

She hastened to the place of appointment, terrified lest she should encounter any wandering mask, and in the spot that had been mentioned, met, as she expected and imagined, Egbert; for both the face and figure of the person, who stood evidently waiting her approach, were completely hidden.

"Jacintha!" exclaimed he, darting forward the moment he beheld her, "how impatiently have I waited for you!" Jacintha, trembling from a variety of emotions, gladly accepted his proffered arm; and her agitation being obvious, he tried to re-assure and compose her.

"Good heaven!" said Jacintha, suddenly interrupting him, "how greatly your voice is altered! 'Tis well you were so particular in letting me know where I should find you, for I should never have known you from it."

Egbert informed her he had altered it on purpose, and advised her to disguise her's as much as possible.

"Oh! as to mine," replied Jacintha, "'tis of very little consequence; for I am sure I shan't make much use of it this evening. I shall be too much dazzled and surprised to do any thing but look and listen."

Her astonishment and admiration on entering the ball-room, far exceeded what she had pictured to herself she should feel; it presented a scene, indeed, of the most brilliant magnificence and gaiety, a scene of which her imagination alone could never have given her an adequate idea. The room, of a noble size, was hung with rose-coloured silk, embossed with silver, and decorated with wreaths of laurel, which appeared suspending the superb lustres that illuminated it. Various coloured lamps ornamented, in a fanciful manner, the balustrading of a light gallery which went round it; and large folding doors, thrown open at each extremity of the room, discovered an extensive suite of apartments, fitted up with scarcely less taste and splendour, than were conspicuous in the ball-room.

The sudden panic which seized Jacintha on her first entrance amidst so crowded, tumultuous, and motley an assembly, by-degrees subsided, and she soon joined in the gaiety and amusements of the place.

After ranging about for nearly two hours, and joining in several dances with Egbert, who took

care no one should separate his fair companion from him, he proposed her viewing the illuminations in the park.

This was a proposal very agreeable to Jacintha, as the increasing heat and noise of the rooms were becoming extremely unpleasant to her. They met a number of masks in the park wandering about the illuminated arches, bowers, and temples, which were erected on every side, and produced a most beautiful effect amidst the dark foliage surrounding them....an effect considerably heightened by the melody of wind instruments.

By degrees Egbert drew Jacintha from the wandering croud into a little shelving path, overshadowed by thick trees, and leading to a retired building, called the druid's cave. A few scattered lamps now feebly lit this building, which was so remote from every other, that scarcely any other sound than the low and murmuring noise of a neighbouring waterfall could be distinguished from it.

"Here," cried Egbert, conducting Jacintha to a seat, and placing himself by her, "here we shall enjoy coolness and quiet."

"Come now," said Jacintha, pulling off her own mask as she spoke, "remove that cloud from your face, and speak in your own voice; for I detest any thing artificial in Egbert."

Without obeying her request, Egbert caught her in a transport to his bosom. "My love, my tenderness," murmured he, in broken accents, "are not artificial."

He continued to speak in the most enthusiastic manner of his passion, his adoration. Jacintha at first laughed at this extravagance, and ridiculed it; but by degrees she became not only displeased,

but alarmed by the increasing freedom of his language, and still greater freedom of his actions. She tried, but in vain, to disengage herself from him, nor were her efforts to make herself heard, for some minutes, more successful. At length, bursting with indignation, she exclaimed, "I see you are determined to make me repent my having acted contrary to my sense of what was right ; this instant let me go, or, depend upon it, I will never forgive your present conduct."

Egbert, however, instead of releasing, held her more firmly to his breast ; and Jacintha, being now convinced he was in a state of intoxication, for only to such a circumstance could she impute such language and actions, as she had never before heard or witnessed, never before thought him capable of uttering or committing, determined, instead of exhausting her spirits in remonstrances and reproaches, which she had now every reason to believe would prove unavailing, to collect them, in order to try and free herself from him.

Her violent efforts to do so, caused his mask to fall to the ground ; and Jacintha beheld....not the features of Egbert....but of lord Gwytherin !

The frightful snare spread for her destruction, instantly presented itself to her view...the snare, into which her own imprudence had precipitated her ; and she now perceived, that a deviation from propriety, scarcely ever escapes punishment.

---

CHAP. X.

---

" Restless his feet, distracted was his walk,  
" Mad were his motions, and confus'd his talk."

---

**HORROR**, for some minutes, suspended the faculties of Jacintha, during which period, lord Gwytherin, kneeling at her feet, his arms still encircling her waist, tried to extenuate his conduct, and soften her in his favour.

As soon as she could speak, Jacintha, assuming an air of composure, though her heart panted with terror, represented with calmness to lord Gwytherin the enormity he had been guilty of, in inveigling her from her home; but at the same time assured him, if he would let her return thither directly, she would bury all that had passed in eternal oblivion.

" Impossible!" exclaimed lord Gwytherin. " I adore, I die for you. He, whose name I have assumed, feels not half the passion, half the admiration I feel for you. My life, my fortune, are devoted to your service, and be assured; since I have gone thus far, I will not recede.

At these words he started up, and darting to the door, hastily locked it. Jacintha now shrieked aloud. " Listen to me, lord Gwytherin," cried she. " Though no feeling of humanity or virtue can sway you, yet let consideration for yourself,



a reflection upon the punishment you must draw upon your own head by offering me any further violence, deter you from it."

"I am well aware of the dangers I incur on your account," replied he, with calmness; "and from the risk I run, I think you must be convinced of the violence of my passion." Then, again throwing himself at her feet, he exerted all his eloquence to try and melt her into tenderness. He again assured her Egbert did not feel for her half the adoration he did. He made her the most splendid offers, the most solemn promises....promises which, he said, he would bind himself in any manner she pleased, to fulfil. He represented how superior the advantages she must derive from a connection with him, would be to any she could expect from an union with Egbert. He hinted the probability there was of his marrying her himself, if he could perceive he had any interest in her heart; and, finally, proposed her setting off with him immediately for London, where a magnificent house, equipage, and servants, waited her reception....vowing she should never have reason to repent the loss of that protection she exchanged for his; and that she had better entitle herself to those proofs of his regard by a relaxation in her severity, than forfeit them by a coldness and contempt, which, though mortifying to his feelings, could not warp him from his designs.

Jacintha, stifling the terror occasioned by this declaration, looked upon him with scorn and disdain.

"I cannot think you, my lord," said she, "so abandoned, as you would wish to make me believe. I see your motive for doing so....you want to intimidate me; but know, all your arts upon this

head are unavailing. It will, therefore, save both your lordship and me a great deal of trouble, if you will now permit me to retire: for of this be assured, that were your proposals as honourable as they are the reverse, I would reject them with the same firmness, nay, almost the same abhorrence, I do at present."

"Then I will no longer delay availing myself of the happy opportunity which a well concerted stratagem has given me," cried he.

At these words Jacintha again shrieked, and burst from him. He again seized her, and she was raising her hand in supplicating terror, when the door was forced open with a violence which rent it from the hinges, and Egbert, wild, raging, foaming, rushed forward.

About two o'clock he had returned home, and was let in by Gillian. He was ascending the stairs, when she suddenly stopped him by exclaiming....

"La, sir! isn't miss Jacintha come back with you?"

"Back with me!" cried Egbert, turning round, and staring at her; "are you mad?"

"Now, lauk, sir," said the simple Gillian, "don't go to frighten me by saying you know nothing about her."

"Explain yourself," cried Egbert, with a sudden sensation of terror.

This Gillian did as concisely as it was possible for her to do. The horror and distraction of Egbert's soul at her information, can better be conceived than described. That Jacintha had been decoyed from her father's house for the vilest purposes....that lord Gwytherin was the contriver of the execrable scheme, which had but too well succeeded, he could not doubt; and ere Gillian had

concluded, he sprang to the hall-door in frantic haste; then recollecting that the assistance of Greville might be necessary in searching for Jacintha, he flew up stairs, and flinging open the door with a violence which not only awoke, but alarmed him and his wife, he exclaimed....“She is gone, she is lost, she is deceived; lord Gwytherin has deceived her!”

“Deceived whom?” asked Greville, trembling.

“Jacintha,” cried Egbert; “and even now....” Then, without finishing the sentence, he darted from the chamber, calling upon Mr. Greville to rise immediately, and follow him to the park, and was out of the house in an instant.

He paused not till he reached the castle. His paleness, and the wildness of his looks, attracted general observation on re-entering the ball-room; for, upon quitting it to return home, he had thrown aside both his mask and masquerade habit; and Woodville, who still continued amidst the gay assembly, directly coming up to him, inquired what was the matter?

In accents scarcely articulate, Egbert informed him.

“This is no place to search for them,” said Woodville; “’tis in the park we must look.”

They hastily descended to the hall, and inquired from the servants whether they knew any thing of their lord? They replied in the negative.

“Here then let us separate,” cried Egbert, motioning for Woodville to take a contrary direction to his.

Agonized, and almost despairing, he wandered about for many minutes. At length, the remote and solitary situation of the druid’s cave recurring

to his recollection, he flew to it, and arrived in a moment most critical to Jacintha.

"Villain, monster!" exclaimed he, as he tore Jacintha from the grasp of lord Gwytherin, and hurled him to the other end of the room; "how hast thou dared....But need I ask, can I wonder? ....thy life has been a continued round of infamy, and there is no deed, no crime, too black for thee to perpetrate."

"Insolence!" cried lord Gwytherin, who burned at that moment with a fury as ungovernable as Egbert's...a fury occasioned by his unexpected disappointment. "But 'tis puerile to talk in this manner; I do not, like a hot-headed boy, vent my passion in words...I let my actions speak!"

"This instant then," said Egbert, his eyes flashing fire, "this instant then, I demand satisfaction for thy atrocious conduct; if, indeed, the chance of taking away thy worthless, thy polluted life, that disgrace to thyself, that curse to others, can be any satisfaction for the insults thou hast offered, the injuries thou has meditated."

"Follow me, then," cried lord Gwytherin, turning upon his heel with affected calmness.

"Oh no! - for heaven's sake, for mercy's sake!" exclaimed Jacintha, clinging to his arm; "do not, dearest Egbert, think of such a measure; be satisfied with knowing the wretch's designs have been defeated, and leave him to the punishment of heaven."

Egbert endeavoured to compose and prevail upon her to return home; but nothing except an absolute promise from him not to persevere in any hostile intentions against lord Gwytherin, could calm, or induce her to comply with his request.

Lord Gwytherin, who had paused at the door, now suddenly exclaimed, unable to endure with any degree of patience the tenderness and solicitude which Jacintha expressed for Egbert, "am I to suppose, sir, from this delay, that you are satisfied with the vent you have already given to your passion?"

At those words Egbert burst from the weak grasp of Jacintha, and conjuring her to return home, rushed after his lordship. They walked together with precipitation to an opening among some trees, at a distance from the cave; here lord Gwytherin desired Egbert to stop till he had procured pistols from the castle.

At this instant Greville and Woodville appeared....The former in his way to the castle, whither he was hastening with trembling expectation, encountered Woodville; and learning from him that neither lord Gwytherin nor Jacintha had yet been discovered, he betrayed symptoms of the deepest horror, and joined, if possible, with increasing eagerness, in searching after them.

"Is she safe...is Jacintha safe?" he wildly demanded, on darting to the spot where Egbert and lord Gwytherin stood, attracted by their voices.

"Thank heaven she is!" replied Egbert.

Greville raised his eyes in grateful transport; then looking with severity at lord Gwytherin, who had involuntarily paused..."Oh, my lord!" he exclaimed, "upon what a dreadful precipice have you stood! You do not know, you cannot picture to yourself half the horrors you have escaped, by the providential frustration of your black designs; to conceive them in their full extent, were sufficient to

- “ Make thy eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
- “ Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
- “ And each particular hair to stand on end,
- “ Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.”

The solemn voice in which these words were pronounced, made lord Gwytherin turn pale.....

“ Had you succeeded,” continued Mr. Greville.

“ But the idea,” cried he, shuddering, “ is too dreadful to dwell upon. Oh, my lord ! be well advised ; profit by the past, and never again spread snares for others, lest, in doing so, you yourself should be entangled into one that might occasion your irremediable ruin !”

“ Your advice is extremely good,” said lord Gwytherin, “ and as such I shall pay it all due attention ; but really, my dear sir,” he continued (wishing to give another turn to the affair, and prevent the disclosure of a scene which he feared might retard, or frustrate the plan he had formed for the retrieval of his fortune), “ you think quite too seriously of an innocent frolic.”

“ An innocent frolic, do you call it ?” said Egbert ; “ add not to your *other* vices the vice of falsehood, nor hope to appease the resentment you have inspired, by denying your offences.”

“ If you follow me, sir,” cried his lordship, haughtily, “ I shall prove to you whether 'tis by *words* I desire to appease your resentment.”

“ What do you mean, my lord ?” said Greville, catching his arm. “ Mr. Oswald, whither are you going ? You are not so mad, you are not so rash, I hope, as to attempt risking your own life, nor so inhuman as to attempt risking the life of a fellow-creature. And you, my lord, can you, indeed, who are the aggressor...can you, who are so totally unfit to appear before the awful tribunal

of heaven...can you, I say, encourage such a design?"

"Sir," cried lord Gwytherin, endeavouring to wrest his arm from Greville, "did you not think your profession would protect you, you would never have dared to provoke my anger by the language you have just used."

"I fear not your anger, my lord," said Greville, with a smile of scorn. "Had I entertained such a dread, I should not have spoken as I have now done, convinced as I am, that to my profession you pay not the least regard, except it is from external appearances. The man who can violate the laws of virtue and hospitality, who can pretend goodwill and friendship to an innocent family, at the very moment he is aiming a destructive blow at their peace and reputation...the man who can offer violence, and use deceit towards a woman....he, I say, and *you* are he, who has committed all these enormities, can respect no profession, however sacred...no age, however reverend! What mockery in such a one to say he respects the ministers of God, at the very moment he is breaking the commands of that God! and what folly in any one to credit such an assertion! What still greater weakness in any one to hesitate telling such a man his real opinion of him! He who could be intimidated from doing so, from holding up the mirror to him which would reflect all his deformity, however great his prowess, or elevated his rank, would deserve to suffer by his vices. Of *your's*, my lord, I have freely spoken; and if that freedom has inspired you with resentment instead of compunction, 'tis not, I am convinced, any internal or external respect for my profession which prevents your giving way to it, but the still small voice of ^

conscience, which tells you, what I have said, is just !”

“Follow me, Mr. Oswald !” said lord Gwytherin again, trembling with passion, and attempting to go on.

“Good heaven, my lord ! are you still so obstinate ?” cried Greville, again interposing. “Must I repeat, that you owe this young man obligations of the greatest magnitude ? He has saved you from the perpetration of a crime, which, but to think on, fills me with horror ; and instead of seeking his life, you should almost kneel with grateful thankfulness before him.”

“Not for obligations of which I am not aware,” said lord Gwytherin, indignantly.

“My lord,” cried Greville, “I conjure, I intreat you to lend me your attention a few minutes longer. And remember, Mr. Oswald,” turning to him as he spoke, “if I can persuade lord Gwytherin to give up his hostile intentions, I shall expect you to do the same.” He then walked to some distance, sufficient to prevent any thing he said from being overheard ; and his lordship, impelled by a secret impulse, followed him, though with apparent reluctance.

Their conference was short ; but when they returned, it was visible that both were extremely agitated by it.

“Mr. Oswald,” said his lordship, in accents scarcely articulate, while every feature was expressive of horror mingled with astonishment, “I submit to the guidance of Mr. Greville.”

“And he must follow your example,” exclaimed Greville.



"What, sir! do you then wish to let the man who meditated so great an injury against you, escape punishment?" said Egbert, with asperity.

"He does not escape punishment," replied Mr. Greville, in a solemn voice.

"Escape it!" repeated lord Gwytherin, raising his eyes to heaven, and striking his breast.

"The hand of man cannot punish like the reproaches of conscience," continued Mr. Greville.

Woodville now interfered; and Egbert at length yielded to the united arguments and influence of his friends. But nothing like a reconciliation took place between him and lord Gwytherin; as his soul utterly abhorred and recoiled from the idea of ever more holding intercourse with a person, who had so nearly effected the destruction of all his happiness.

"Remember," cried lord Gwytherin to Mr. Greville, as he turned to depart, "I shall expect you in the course of the day, according to your promise; as you have raised a storm in my breast, so, perhaps, you may be able to allay it."

---

CHAP. XI.

---

“ He fondly sued, and warmly press’d,  
“ To win her to his mind.”

---

THE moment lord Gwytherin retired, Egbert flew to the place where he had left Jacintha, and found her lying senseless upon the ground within a few paces of it. The terror she had suffered on her own, and now felt on his account, so completely overcame her, that in attempting to follow him, she had fainted away.

His efforts, together with those of her father and Woodville, who had followed him, but still more the sound of his voice, and the assurance of his safety, by degrees revived her; and as soon as she could move, she was conducted home.

Mrs. Greville was already in the parlour, and also Gertrude, whom she had roused up. Mr. Greville, judging of her anxiety by his own, and perceiving she looked extremely agitated, hastened to her, and taking her hand, begged her, in the tenderest manner, to compose herself, as Jacintha had happily been rescued from all the dangers which environed her.

“ ‘Tis more than she deserved, then,” said Mrs. Greville, unable to controul the malignant passion into which she was thrown, by the mortification she experienced at finding, contrary to all her

hopes and expectations, the stratagem of lord Gwytherin had not succeeded; "such imprudence as she has been guilty of, merited a severe punishment."

"It has not gone unpunished, my dear," replied Mr. Greville, who imputed the warmth of his wife to the displeasure she felt at Jacintha's conduct. "You yourself must allow it has not, when you reflect upon the terror she has undergone."

"I only reflect," cried Mrs. Greville, "that she has before been indiscreet."

"How, madam!" said Egbert, darting a fierce and indignant glance upon her. "Is it in having permitted herself before to be deceived? But consider, madam, that Innocence is the sister of Credulity; and that lord Gwytherin is not the only plotter in the world....the only person capable of using an honourable and virtuous name, for the blackest purposes."

Neither those words, nor the look which accompanied them, could be misunderstood. Both Mrs. Greville and Gertrude at once perceived that Egbert alluded to the letter they had fabricated. Shame, apprehension, or conscience; or, perhaps, all united, instantly died their cheeks with blushes; and Mrs. Greville, fearful of exasperating Egbert any further, lest he should be more explicit, directly assumed a milder aspect, and apologized in some manner for her expressions, by declaring she scarcely knew what she said, she was so bewildered by the shock she had received about Jacintha.

She then, in a tender accent, advised her to go to her chamber, and try to take some repose.... advice which Jacintha did not hesitate to comply with. Woodville, almost at the same moment,

departed to seek after his sister, and Egbert repaired to his room, but not to rest.

His mind was too perturbed to admit of his taking any. He still burned with indignation against lord Gwytherin, and almost condemned Mr. Greville for his interference; who, he thought, had borne too calmly, the injury meditated against his daughter. A thousand disquieting ideas occurred, and he felt that nothing but an immediate union with Jacintha could restore his tranquillity. In consequence of this conviction, he determined to lose no time in trying to prevail on Mr. Greville to accede to his wishes. He accordingly returned almost immediately to the parlour, and, as soon as breakfast was over, requested a private conference with him. With this request Mr. Greville directly complied; and proceeding together to the garden, Egbert explicitly acquainted him with his present unhappiness, and the only means by which, he was convinced, it could be removed.

But on this head Mr. Greville was as inflexible as ever. He again repeated his positive determination not to permit an union to take place between Egbert and Jacintha, till the former was of age: and Egbert having in vain exerted all his eloquence, parted from him abruptly, in high and manifest displeasure at what he deemed his unreasonable caprice and obstinacy.

The day was far advanced before Jacintha quit-  
ted her chamber. On returning to the parlour, she found her father there alone. He immediately began to inquire into the particulars of the artifice which had inveigled her from home; and, from what she told him, it was evident that lord Gwytherin, under the disguise of Egbert, had hoped to take advantage of her tenderness and

credulity ; not doubting but the gay, dissipated, and voluptuous scene, into which he introduced her, would have melted her to his purpose.

" I hope," said Mr. Greville, with a gravity of voice and countenance bordering on severity, " I hope the remembrance of the dreadful dangers you incurred by a deviation from propriety, will guard you in future from a similar error."

" From the engagement existing between you and Mr. Oswald, you may say, perhaps, or at least, think your conduct excusable, in accepting an invitation supposed to come from him ; but this I can by no means allow. No consideration, no inducement, should influence us to act contrary to *our* sense of right ; and that you did so in going to an amusement I forbade, in stealing clandestinely from your home at midnight, I have not a doubt. Nay, that blush convinces me, that at the very moment you were obeying the dictates of inclination, you were acting contrary to those of prudence.

" Pain and remorse almost ever attend the triumph of the former. And of this be assured, that deception and dissimulation never go unpunished ; and also, that in trying to outwit others, we frequently outwit ourselves. Had not Mr. Oswald interposed, what a miserable, what a wretched creature, at this moment, might you have been, from having suffered yourself to be allured into indiscretion ! But I will not shock you or myself," he continued, perceiving she grew pale, and shuddered, " by dwelling upon the dreadful idea of such misery.

" Be grateful to Providence for your preservation ; and still continue to deserve its protection, by a strict adherence to what is right."

The heart of Jacintha acknowledged the justness of what her father said; and it tended to heighten the horror with which she reflected upon an imprudence, that had so nearly proved fatal to herself, and injurious to others.

Egbert could not banish the uneasy reflections which had obtruded upon his mind; and they at length determined him to try his eloquence with the daughter, since it had proved unavailing with the father, and endeavoured to prevail on her to accompany him immediately to Scotland.

For the purpose of making this proposal, he returned from Woodville's, where he had dined, at an early hour; for he felt too much irritated with Mr. Greville to continue at home, who neither had, nor could, he believed, assign any satisfactory or sufficient reason for the delay of his nuptials, and whom he consequently accused of caprice.

He contrived, in the course of the evening, to obtain a private conversation with Jacintha in the garden. She heard his proposal with astonishment, and endeavoured to rally him, but to no effect, out of the ideas which had caused him to make it; she then explicitly declared she could not accede to it.

"I cannot, I durst not, dearest Egbert," said she, endeavouring as much as possible to soften a refusal, which she perceived, by the lowering gloom of his brow, and the sudden paleness of his cheek, at once offended and distressed him, "consent to such a measure. The dangers I so recently and narrowly escaped, have made too strong an impression upon my mind, to permit me again to act contrary to my conviction of right, by doing which they alone were incurred. I

should think myself inexcusable if I attempted to act in opposition to the wishes of a parent, who has ever manifested the strongest...the tenderest anxiety for my welfare and happiness."

"Then, I suppose," said Egbert, "if he expressed a desire to separate us entirely, you would think yourself bound to obey it."

"No," replied Jacintha; "because I think no child is bound to commit an action inconsistent with *her* ideas of honour, even for a parent; but every thing short of that, I think a parent, such as mine particularly, has a right to expect."

The importunities of Egbert were not to be silenced by what Jacintha said. He renewed his arguments. He talked of the shortness of life; the folly, therefore, of delaying happiness, when there was so very limited a time for enjoying it.

Jacintha, however, continued inflexible; and he parted from her, as he had done from her father, abruptly, and in displeasure.

Every day increased the unhappiness of Egbert; for every day tended to increase the apprehensions which had taken possession of his mind.

With that promptitude, which so many of us have to torment ourselves, he conjured up a thousand images to torture and affright him. He began to fear that Mr. Greville was forming designs inimical to his peace. His long and frequent visits to the castle, the cause of which was never revealed; the mild and forgiving manner in which he spoke of lord Gwytherin; the severity with which he checked any expression of disrespect against him, particularly if it came from the lips of Jacintha, all these circumstances suggested this tormenting fear, and persuaded him into a thorough belief that lord Gwytherin had made an

honourable proposal for Jacintha, if that could be called honourable which was made in defiance of her solemn engagement to another person; and that her father, swayed by the powerful charms of ambition, had yielded to it, notwithstanding his probity and humility, and was concerting measures to bring about an alliance between them.

Egbert well knew the hold he had of Jacintha's heart, but he also well knew the influence her father had over it; and he dreaded to think of the consequences, which might result from his exerting that influence. After some deliberation, therefore, he resolved not to trust his happiness to so doubtful an issue; but at once terminate his inquietude concerning her, and prevent her constancy being put to any test, by carrying her off to Scotland.

This resolution was no sooner formed, than imparted to Woodville, who (as he did not deem the suspicions of Egbert ill-founded) not only highly approved of it, but promised to assist him in putting it in execution, and also to accompany him in his journey.

Preparations were accordingly made for it without delay; and the heart of Egbert dilated with ecstasy, at the prospect he beheld of speedily binding Jacintha to himself by a bond too sacred to be broken.





# NOCTURNAL VISIT,

## A TALE.

---

---

BY MARIA REGINA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, MAID OF  
THE HAMLET, VICAR OF LANSDOWNE, AND  
CLERMONT.

---

---

"Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,  
"That I would speak to thee."

SHAKSPEARE.

---

---

VOL. II.

---

---

PHILADELPHIA:

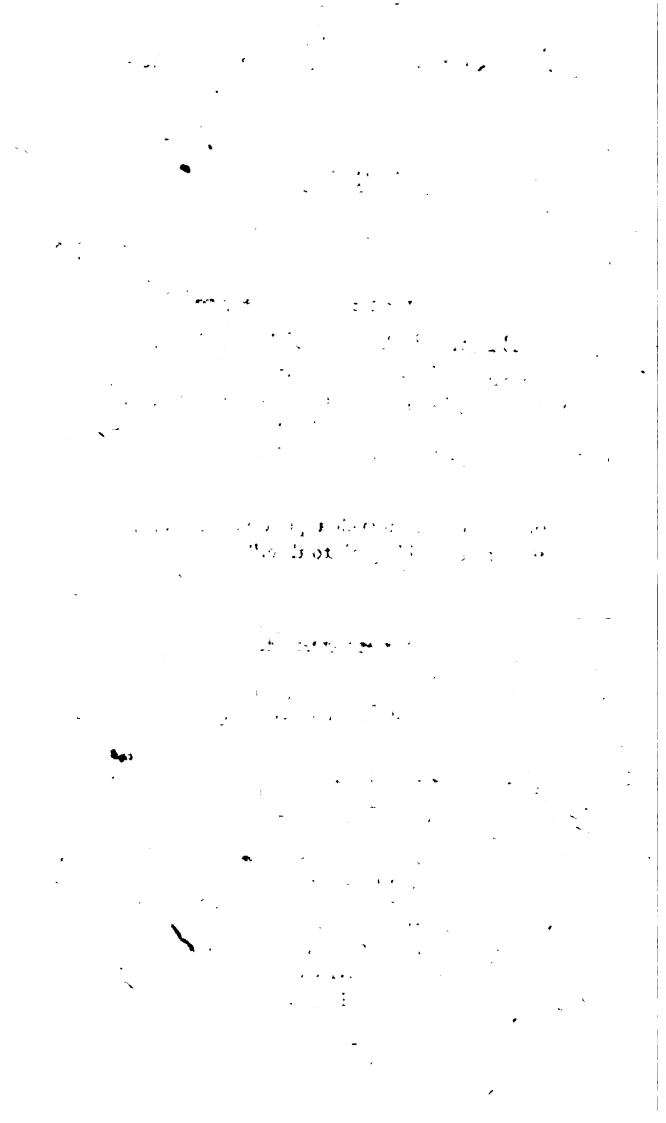
PUBLISHED BY JOHN CONRAD, & CO. NO. 30, CHESNUT  
STREET, PHILADELPHIA; M. & I. CONRAD, & CO.  
NO. 144, MARKET-STREET, BALTIMORE; AND RAPIN,  
CONRAD, & CO. WASHINGTON CITY.

H. MAXWELL, PRINTER.

.....

1801.

P. 273



# NOCTURNAL VISIT.

---

## CHAP. I.

---

"In struggling with misfortunes lies the proof of virtue."  
SHAKESPEARE.

---

**A**BOUT a week after the masquerade, as Jacintha was walking, at the close of day, with Egbert, through a shady lane, contiguous to the village, she suddenly beheld, in an opening, leading to the high road, a post-chaise and four.... Egbert eagerly drew her towards it. The door lay open, and, to her great surprise, she beheld Woodville seated in it; but before she could make any inquiry, Egbert, snatching her up in his arms, placed her in it, then leaping in himself, the door was instantly closed, and the postilions set off with the utmost expedition.

"Good heaven ! Egbert," said Jacintha, as soon as she recovered the power of utterance, which, the suddenness of this action for a few minutes deprived her of, "What do you mean?"

Egbert caught her to his bosom, and, after some passionate expressions of tenderness, briefly gave her the explanation she demanded.

Jacintha highly resented his suspicions respecting her father, to which he declared the project he had so happily carried into effect was owing. They were suspicions, she said, not more groundless than injurious; and she absolutely insisted on his dropping his present design....a design which, if persevered in, could not fail of exposing them to ridicule, well known as was their situation with regard to each other.

Egbert was deaf to her entreaties, and tried to silence her remonstrances by endeavouring to convince her he had reason for his fears. Of this, however, she could not be persuaded, and continued to expostulate, though without effect, as the chaise still proceeded in its first direction; but a sudden stop was put to its velocity. In turning the sharp angle of a road, one of the hind wheels flew off, and laid it, not very gently, upon the ground.

As soon as Jacintha was disengaged from the broken vehicle, which was not done without some difficulty, she renewed her entreaties to Egbert to relinquish, what she termed, his rash design.

"This accident," said she, "seems a warning to you to do so."

Egbert, though vexed and provoked, could not forbear laughing at what he called her superstition; and, without regarding her remonstrances, hurried her on to a small public-house, at a little distance from the spot where the misadventure happened. Here he procured a messenger to go to a neighbouring town for another carriage, nothing of the kind being to be procured at this place; then following Jacintha into the room whither Woodville had conducted her, he exerted all his eloquence to try and calm her agitation,

and reconcile her to his scheme. He painted in the most forcible colours, the misery occasioned by his fears respecting lord Gwytherin...fears, which he had no other method of terminating than by the present step; and concluded, by conjuring her not to cloud the happiness of the present hour by retaining her displeasure.

"I could have wished you to act otherwise," replied Jacintha, whose countenance evinced the perturbation of her mind. "I still wish it, because I am convinced your fears are groundless. Did I think otherwise...Oh Egbert! you know my heart."

"I do," cried Egbert, passionately straining her to his bosom as he spoke, "and therefore depend on being forgiven."

The sudden opening of the door made him hastily turn round, and he beheld, to his unutterable astonishment and dismay, Mr. Greville entering.

No real or imaginary spectre ever excited greater consternation than was now raised by the appearance of this worthy man. Woodville looked confounded. Egbert stood wildly staring at him, and Jacintha turned pale, and trembled, fearful that he would scarcely be brought to believe she was ignorant of Egbert's intentions, and confident that to think she had openly defied his authority, would provoke his serious displeasure.

"I see," said Mr. Greville, advancing from the door, where he had paused for a minute, to survey the astonished group, "I see I was not mistaken, and that my presence is not more unexpected than undesired."

Egbert, who perceived he could no longer hope to persevere in his journey, now determined to

learn, if possible, why his marriage had hitherto, or might still be delayed, as he could not be more his own master, when of age, than he was at present. He also resolved, if Mr. Greville's answers were not perfectly satisfactory, to be very explicit in acquainting him with the motives which had led to the step his presence interrupted; better able to brook the idea of incurring his resentment, than that of continuing any longer in incertitude, and consequent misery concerning Jacintha.

"I can no longer delay," cried Mr. Greville, as soon as Egbert had concluded the vehement inquiries which passion and anxiety dictated, "I can no longer," continued he, in a solemn tone, "delay acquainting you with the motives which have hitherto, and must still, I fear, even beyond the period I mentioned, make me defer your union with Jacintha. I have long wished to inform you of them, but I still wanted resolution to do so;... the disclosure now, however, becomes unavoidable, and with the deepest regret....." He paused.

"Speak on!" said Egbert, the paleness of death overspreading his cheek. "Doubt not my firmness....I have been the pupil of adversity."

"And doubt not," cried Mr. Greville, "that the Merciful Being, who extricated you out of your former troubles, will extricate you from your succeeding ones, if you still rely upon him...still continue, as formerly, to do your part."

"Relieve my suspense," said Egbert. "I would rather feel the sword, than behold it suspended."

"In one word then," said Mr. Greville, "your fortune is gone! The agent, entrusted with the final arrangement of the late colonel Moreland's affairs, has decamped with the sums received from the sale of his estates; and it was my utter

inability to give Jacintha such a portion as the altered state of your circumstances required, that prevented, and still prevents, my consenting to your immediate union."

Egbert appeared thunderstruck for a moment; then striking his forehead with a distracted air, he exclaimed....

"The evil destiny of my father pursues me, and my short experience of happiness but renders more dreadful the succeeding misery."

"Is this your vaunted firmness?" cried Mr. Greville.

"Can you wonder...can you reproach me," said Egbert, "for feeling acutely....for being even agonized by such a blow as this....a blow which strikes at my dearest hopes....my long cherished expectations of felicity? Yet think not," continued he, with increasing vehemence, after the pause of a minute, "think not that I now regret your intervention. Alas! how little do we know what can render us happy! Had I accomplished my late wishes and intentions, every pang I now feel would have been doubled, at the idea of involving the woman I adore in calamity. Sooner than do so, I swear....before heaven I swear, I would resign her for ever. Yes, my Jacintha, to loose thee, would not make me half so wretched, as to think I had rendered thee miserable."

"Miserable!" inwardly repeated Jacintha, who, with rapture, would have shared his destiny, though assured

"That the bare earth

"Would be their resting place, its roots their food,

"Some cleft their habitation."

"Miserable!...Oh! how impossible for thee to make me so, except it is by leaving me!"



"The dreadful scenes of domestic misery I have beheld," pursued Egbert shuddering, as if with secret horror, at the retrospection, "have made too deep an impression upon my heart, to permit me to indulge its tenderness at the expence of her I love. We must part then, Jacintha...we must part," he cried, with uncontrollable emotion, as he felt her warm tears fall upon the trembling hand which clasped her's to his heart, "till a happier destiny prevails."

"Patience and fortitude," cried Mr. Greville, "not only alleviate, but overcome misfortunes; and I doubt not their united efforts enabled you to surmount those which have befallen you."

He then begged he would endeavour to compose himself, and listen calmly to some further particulars, it was necessary for him to hear, relative to the late unfortunate event.

Egbert obeyed him to the utmost of his power; and Mr. Greville proceeded to inform him; that, very soon after the demise of lady Oswald, he had received a letter from his (Egbert's) correspondent in London, acquainting him with the perfidious conduct of the agent, and entreating him to break it in the best manner he could possibly do.

"I hesitated, however, to disclose it at that period," continued Mr. Greville, "not only from my unwillingness to add affliction to affliction, lest the burden should become too heavy to be borne; but from an idea which suddenly occurred, and which upon communicating to your friend, met his approbation, namely, to write to the marquis of Methwold an explicit account of the unexpected reverse in your situation, and appeal to his humanity and justice to make you amends for the deficiencies, or rather cruelties of fortune."

"His humanity, his justice!" repeated Egbert indignantly, his faded colour reviving at the mention of his name. "Good heaven! these are virtues which he does not possess. Had he possessed the smallest particle of them, would he have suffered.....but...I cannot dwell upon the dreadful subject," cried he, again turning pale, and faltering.

"I hoped," said Mr. Greville, "that his own sorrows had taught him to feel for the sorrows of another person; for the callous heart is frequently softened to compassion by such means."

"His sorrows!" repeated Egbert.

"Yes, I learned that he was under the heaviest affliction, in consequence of the languishing state into which his darling grandson, lord Augustus Oswald, the heir apparent, as you know, of his titles and estates, had suddenly fallen; and flattered myself I could not have made the appeal I have mentioned at a more favourable juncture.

"But, unfortunately, ere I dispatched my letter, he had sailed with the invalid for Lisbon, whose premature death, if it should take place, makes you undisputed heir to the honours and fortunes of the marquis; who, I also hoped, from this consideration, exclusive of any other, would be induced to serve you. My letter was forwarded to Lisbon; but, as yet, I have received no answer to it."

"A convincing proof you never will," exclaimed Egbert, hastily.

"I own I am rather doubtful," said Mr. Greville; "such a length of time has elapsed since I wrote; especially as I have found means of learning, that he has written several times to England since his departure; and, through the same means, I have also heard, that lord Augustus is better."

## NOCTURNAL VISIT.

"As soon as I began to doubt receiving an answer from the marquis, I began to consider in what manner I should break the unpleasant intelligence with which I was charged, to you. Day after day passed away without coming to any determination to speak the truth. I still invented, found some excuse for deferring my intended communication, from the unconquerable unwillingness I felt to interrupt your happiness."

Egbert at this instant felt the keenest remorse the suspicions he had suffered to pervade his mind respecting Mr. Greville. Nothing, perhaps, wounds a generous, a noble heart, more severely, than the idea of having done injustice, even in thought, to any person; and that he had done injustice to Mr. Greville, the circumstances he recalled, as well as the language he used, evidently proved.

"But a letter I yesterday received from your friend in town," proceeded Mr. Greville, "at length made me resolve not to postpone what I wished to communicate beyond to-morrow, as I now saw clearly I should injure you by any longer delay. The purport of the letter was to inform me, that the agent had been traced from Jamaica to St. Domingo, and that it was the opinion of the person who gave this intelligence, if immediate steps were taken, by which he meant, if some active person went over directly, part, at least, of the embezzled property might be recovered. Your friend laid this opinion before the different gatekeepers, but not one of them would undertake the use in any manner whatever. He trusted, however, that you, about whom he professed himself deeply interested, would not feel a similar reluctance."

"Reluctance!" repeated Egbert. "Good heaven! I shall be all impatience till I embark. I feel new life, new spirits, at the thoughts of recovering something from the wreck, and still being happy."

"Many, many bright years of felicity are before you, I trust," said Mr. Greville. "There is one consolation, one happiness, at all events, which must be your's...that, which ever results from the consciousness of properly performing our part."

---

---

CHAP. II.

---

---

" Now Heaven, I trust, hath joys in store  
" To crown thy constant breast."

---

---

**BY** this time the chaise, destined at first for a very different journey, had arrived; and, as the night was growing late, Mr. Greville, fearful of his wife's being uneasy at his long absence, hurried Egbert and Jacintha to it, following them himself; Woodville particularly requesting to take his horse.

On their way to Wyefield, Mr. Greville accounted for his unexpected appearance at the inn, which was owing to accident, and not to premeditated design, as they had at first imagined.

He had gone, early in the morning, to spend the day with a friend, who lived on the Holywell road. On arriving at his house, he found him just preparing to set out, about some particular business, to a place near Chester. He asked Mr. Greville to accompany him thither, to which he made no objection, the day being delightfully fine, and the ride exceedingly pleasant. On their return they stopped at an inn to refresh their horses; and scarcely had Mr. Greville been seated in a little front parlour, ere to his unutterable astonishment, he beheld Jacintha and her companions entering. For a moment he sat lost in thought, vainly trying to conjecture what could have brought them to such a

place, at such an hour. A sudden recollection then of the impetuous temper of Egbert, and the high displeasure he expressed at the delay of his nuptials, made him conceive the real cause; and he blessed the chance which had given him an opportunity of frustrating so rash a project...a project which, if accomplished, could only, in the present crisis of affairs, have been productive of sorrow and repentance.

Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, who, in the early part of the evening, had been at a party in the village, were all amazement (an amazement not intermingled with much concern for any one of them) at the long absence of Mr. Greville, Jacintha and Egbert; and vainly inquired from the maid and the boys, if they knew where the latter were gone?

Their surprise was infinitely increased on beholding the three return together, in a chaise and four. Mrs. Greville scarcely suffered them to enter the parlour, before she eagerly demanded the cause of this strange, this mysterious circumstance. Mr. Greville, however, declined gratifying her curiosity till they were alone.

The agitation and distress so visible in Egbert's looks, whose spirits had again sunk at the idea of the long separation which would, in all probability, take place between him and Jacintha; and the still deeper melancholy that was impressed upon her countenance, immediately attracted the observation of Mrs. Greville, and gave rise to various surmises, which heightened her impatience to learn the particulars Mr. Greville had promised to communicate. When they were revealed, no language could fully express the joy they gave her.

To hear that Egbert, whom she detested ever since she had given up all hopes of gaining him for Gertrude...to hear that he was sunk, distressed, and might eventually be deprived of every stay...to hear that all the pleasing prospects of Jacintha were destroyed, and find that she was again thrown entirely into her power, inspired her with a pleasure almost too exquisite to be concealed. Luckily, however, for her, she had to do with a person not more unsuspicious of deceit in her bosom, than unconscious of it in his own; and who, therefore, believed to be sincere, the expressions of regret which she forced herself to utter.

"I see, my dear," said Greville, completely imposed upon, "to have had the power of placing this amiable, this noble young man even in humble independence, would have afforded to you as much delight as it would have done to me. Had such been the case, I should certainly have opposed his embarking in his present enterprise."

"You do me justice, indeed, my dear," said Mrs. Greville. "I should have been very happy to have *had the power*."

"We must, we will hope," cried Mr. Greville, "still to see him and our poor Jacintha happy."

"To be sure, my dear," replied Mrs. Greville, "*as happy as I wish them to be*."

The anguish which Jacintha restrained in the presence of her father and her lover, before whom the paleness of her cheek, and the trickling tears which bedewed it, alone evinced her feelings, she gave way to in the solitude of her chamber. She there wept, even to agony, at the idea, not merely of (in all probability) her long separation from Egbert, but at the idea of the hazards, the numerous dangers, he might encounter. These apprehen-

sions, however, she did not encourage. She endeavoured to exert her reason to conquer them. Anticipations of evil, she knew, must inevitably increase her wretchedness, if indulged; besides, they could not avert what she dreaded...and she also considered, that the ills she feared might never come to pass. Why, therefore, unnecessarily torment herself? Why sharpen the sting of real sorrow, by yielding to the terrors of imagination? The same Almighty Providence, she reflected, presided alike in every place, and to its divine protection she devoutly recommended her Egbert.

She at once tried to struggle with her fears, and with her grief; but all her efforts to subdue, in any degree, the latter, were ineffectual. She still wept and trembled at the approaching separation, concealing, however, to the utmost of her power, the anguish she endured. But it could not be hidden from the watchful eyes of Egbert. He discerned the conflicts of her mind. He saw what she suffered to save him from an additional pang; and, while his heart was fluttered by this proof of her tenderness, it was also wrung by the knowledge of her affection.

In the bustle of preparation, he strove to lose the agony of thought. "In a short time," cried he, to himself, "in a short time, and we shall again be....reunited. But in the interval, the little interval, which intervenes, what may not happen? Ah! that is the reflection which maddens, which torments me! I leave my Jacintha again exposed to the tyranny, the artifices of an inhuman mother. Should that tyranny be now too much for her gentle heart to bear, which will not easily, I know, forego the sorrow that pervades it on my account;



and should I, at my return, find, instead of my love, her....."

He started; he groaned at the dreadful idea which obtruded itself upon his imagination, and looking up to heaven, he fervently prayed that he might never live to hear Jacintha was lost to him.

"Mrs. Greville could not conceal from him, nor from Jacintha, the malignant joy she felt at their unhappiness. Neither could she forbear attempting to wound the proud heart of Egbert, by remitting those attentions with which she had before distinguished him; but here her malice was impotent...Egbert felt it not, except when directed against Jacintha.

In the course of two days, every thing was prepared for his departure, accompanied by Woodville, who determined not to leave him until he had embarked; a determination which gave great pleasure to Jacintha. He was to proceed from Wyefield to London, to receive final instructions for his future conduct, and from thence to Falmouth, to take his passage in a West-India packet.

The evening previous to his departure, Mr. Greville invited him to a solitary walk. He had many things to say to him, which he believed would be much better received and delivered if they were alone. He wished to know what course he had determined upon, or whether he had formed any plan for his future settlement in life, if his exertions to recover his fortune should prove unsuccessful.

Egbert, who had not suffered his thoughts for a moment, to dwell upon the possibility of a disappointment, now started, and turned pale, at the idea of one being suggested.

"No," cried he, with a degree of wildness, "I have thought of no course...I have formed no plan.

To what purpose should I do either, without friends, without interest to assist me?"

Mr. Greville, deeply affected by these words, did all in his power to check the progress of despair; and as a proof that we should never give way to despondence, the blackest prospect often brightening when least expected, he lightly touched upon his own story in the following words, as they pursued their walk through some lonely meadows at a little distance from the village.

---

CHAP. III.

---

" He various changes of the world had known,  
" And strange vicissitudes of human fate;  
" Good after ill, and after pain, delight,  
" Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.  
" Since every man who lives, is born to die,  
" And none can boast sincere felicity;  
" With equal mind, what happens let us bear;  
" Nor joy, nor grieve too much for things beyond our care;  
" Like pilgrims to the appointed place we tend;  
" The world's an inn, and death's the journey's end!"

DRYDEN.

---

" MY father," said Mr. Greville, " was the youngest son of a respectable family. He was brought up in the mercantile line, and, before my boyish days were over, had realized a handsome fortune. But the tenure of earthly enjoyments is uncertain...by the sudden failure of a foreign house, he was deprived of the fruits of his long industry. The unexpected misfortunes which fell upon him, were not half so severely regretted upon his own account, as upon the account of his family, consisting of me and one daughter.

" At this distressing period, an old friend, the companion of his early days, and a man of considerable fortune and consequence, stepped forward to his assistance. Through his means, my father was enabled to arrange his affairs, and re-establish

himself in business; but, in a very narrow and circumscribed line, particularly when compared with that in which he had formerly been.

“In order to lighten his expences, his friend proposed taking me entirely under his own care, and educating me for the church; having it in his power to make a very ample provision for me in that line.

“My father received this additional proof of his regard with the deepest gratitude; and, at the age of fourteen, I exchanged his protection for that of sir Hugh Netley, and accompanied him to his residence in Kent.

“His lady and one son, about my age, comprised his family. This son was the idol of his parents; not so much, perhaps, from being the only survivor of a numerous offspring, as from being the last hope of their ancient house...the person, by whose means their names and honours were to be transmitted to posterity, as a consideration of deep importance to minds swayed by pride and vanity.

“Their excessive indulgence strengthened the violence of passions naturally impetuous; but their blind partiality rendered them incapable of perceiving the ill effects produced by this conduct.

“I shared all the advantages which they gave this darling heir, in point of education, and was placed at the same university with him in Oxford; from whence, during the vacations, we generally returned to Kent. In the course of one of those visits, I had an opportunity of witnessing the unjust lengths to which the extravagant partiality of Netley's parents could lead them, when either his reputation or tranquillity were in any manner affected.

" In a little cottage, near the park-gate, there resided a widow, who, reduced, by the unexpected death of her husband, from a state of comfort to one bordering on penury, had, with an only daughter, taken refuge in this humble retreat, from

" The cruel scorn

" Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet

" From giddy passion, and low-minded pride."

" Here they endeavoured to support themselves by their industry ; and their laudable efforts were greatly encouraged and aided by the kindness and humanity of some neighbouring families of distinction, who had known them in more prosperous days. The girl was extremely pretty, and, as Netley grew up, she attracted his attention, and he determined to leave no means untried to gain her ; persuading himself that the affluence in which he could place her, would be quite a sufficient restitution to her and her mother, for the loss of her innocence.

" He soon found, however, that they were not of the same opinion ; and with difficulty could find an opportunity of speaking to her. But her mother could not always be at her side, and he surprised her one day in a wood. He forced her to hear the most insulting offers, from which he proceeded to the most unbecoming actions ; all his eloquence being unavailing to win her to his wishes.

" I was luckily passing near the spot at the time, and hearing the screams of a female, hastily darted to it.

" Enraged at the scene I beheld, I not only tore her from his grasp, but reproached him, in the bitterest terms, for his base, unmanly conduct.

“ He replied to my reproaches with insolence. He meanly spoke of the obligations I lay under to his family, and plainly declared, on that account, he had a right to expect the most implicit deference and submission from me.

“ I endeavoured to curb the indignation and resentment which he excited ; but when he raised his hand against me, I lost all forbearance, and falling upon him, I gave him that chastisement he merited. Some accidental passengers separated us with difficulty, and we returned by different ways to the house. On reaching it, I hastened to my chamber, too much irritated to think of the unpleasant consequences which might result to me from my behaviour to young Netley.

“ Not so the poor widow. She trembled at the idea of the evils I had, perhaps, drawn upon myself by my services to her daughter ; and her grateful heart instantly prompted her to wait upon sir Hugh and lady Netley, in order to try and avert what she dreaded, by giving a plain statement of what had happened.

“ To her extreme mortification, her narrative was received with the utmost coldness, and she was dismissed without having her suspense or anxiety in any degree lessened.

“ Her fears about me, however, proved fruitless. Sir Hugh and his lady, from a suspicion of their son, in this one instance, not having acted correctly, did not choose to manifest any displeasure against me for my conduct to him, lest, by doing so, they should render the affair more public.... They contented themselves with wreaking their revenge upon the unfortunate widow, to the imprudence of whose daughter they ascribed and reported the indiscretion of their son was owing.

They withdrew their protection entirely from her ; and, as they bore a pretty general sway in the neighbourhood, their example was almost universally followed, and she soon found herself compelled to seek another habitation.

“ With floods of tears and bitter anguish she submitted to this necessity. A long residence in it had attached her to her little dwelling. I pitied her distress, and while I did all in my power to mitigate it, I vainly wished I could have sheltered her from the despotic tyranny of offended pride.

“ Netley, conscious of having used me ill, did not resist the efforts which were made to reconcile us.

“ I could not but perceive the errors of Netley met with the same pernicious indulgence from the private tutor, who attended us to Oxford, and who was recommended to sir Hugh by a noble family, whom he served in that capacity, that they did from his parents ; but I was too young, too inexperienced, to discover the motives from whence this indulgence originated ; or, that to it was owing the complete ascendancy which Barclay by degrees, acquired over the mind of his pupil.

“ Though I did not perfectly esteem, I warmly admired him. Highly favoured by nature, he had improved her gifts by the most studious attention, and a constant intercourse with elegant society, and was altogether one of the most accomplished and pleasing men I ever knew.

“ He sometimes made us shorten our visits in Kent, in order to accompany him to a little paternal seat he possessed in Norfolk.....a perfect Paradise in miniature. High woods sheltered the house at the rear ; before it flowed a spacious

river ; on either side was a wilderness of sweets ; and vines, myrtles, and honeysuckles completely covered it. This delightful mansion, the interior of which corresponded with its exterior, was graced by an inhabitant worthy of such a dwelling ....the niece of Barclay, the most lovely woman, without exception, I ever beheld. Her manners, like those of her uncle, were fascinating ; nor were her accomplishments less brilliant, less seductive, than his.

“ You may well believe such a creature could not fail of inspiring the liveliest admiration. I felt at once the power of her charms, but carefully concealed the impression they made upon me, from a conviction of her being attached to Netley. To my utter astonishment, however, he did not take the least pains to cultivate her regard. On the contrary, he betrayed an utter indifference to her attractions, to the regret and disappointment, I thought, of her uncle ; who, I could not help thinking, had some ambitious projects in his head when he introduced her to the notice of his pupil.

“ On being ordained, sir Hugh appointed me his domestic chaplain, until the living he had promised me should become vacant, by the death of its old incumbent.

“ Soon after this event, Netley and I again accompanied Barclay to Norfolk. The alteration in the appearance of his niece struck me the moment I beheld her. All her florid bloom was gone, and a deep melancholy marked her countenance, which evidently proved her gaiety was counterfeit.

“ My heart dictated an inquiry (which prudence and propriety repelled), into the cause of this extraordinary change.



"Two days after my arrival in Norfolk, Netley entered my chamber one morning, where I was reading, and congratulated me on my good fortune.

"In what?" said I, laying aside my book.

"In making a conquest of so lovely a girl as Edith Barclay," replied he.

"You jest," cried I; "if there be any conquest in the case, you certainly have the glory of making it."

"You are mistaken, I assure you," replied he, very gravely. "'Tis for you the secret sigh of her soul has been breathed. Her uncle made the discovery this morning, and revealed it to me in confidence. All her languor, all her melancholy, have been owing to what she believed was a hopeless passion for you, in consequence of the uniform coldness of your manner towards her."

"I could no longer doubt his sincerity, and eagerly accounted for my coldness, by declaring the opinion I had conceived of her being attached to him.

'It was jealousy made you think so,' said he. 'Like love, it often blinds the judgment.'

"He then informed me my addresses would meet with the approbation of her uncle; and promised, on our return to Kent, to have every thing arranged, in the most agreeable manner, for my immediate union.

"I thanked him, in the most grateful terms, for the interest he took in my happiness; not, however, without feeling somewhat surprised at receiving so unexpected a proof of his regard.

"He led me to the feet of my blushing mistress, who heard my warm protestations of affection with a coldness and confusion which would have

chilled all my hopes, but for the prior assurance I had received of her attachment. By degrees, however, she became less reserved, and I thought myself one of the happiest of men. Short and delusive was my felicity. On the very night of this, as I imagined, auspicious day, I found, on retiring to my chamber, a sealed billet upon the table, directed to me. Surprised at so strange a circumstance, I hastily tore it open, and with increasing astonishment, not devoid of horror, read the following words, in a hand utterly unknown to me:....

“ Treachery is on foot....On perusal of this, repair with caution to the reading closet adjoining miss Barclay’s dressing-room, and you will be thoroughly convinced that the writer of these lines has not deviated from *truth*.”

“ I shall pass over the feelings and suspicions which pervaded my soul, on the perusal of this note; suffice it to say, I obeyed the anonymous advice it contained, without loss of time, and stationed myself in the closet, which was elegantly fitted up as a library, and opened into miss Barclay’s dressing-room. I found the door of communication sufficiently open to let me see into the room without being seen myself. It was now lighted up, and in a few minutes miss Barclay entered, followed, to my inexpressible astonishment, by Netley.

“ She threw herself upon a sofa, and reproached him with having made her the most miserable of women. He replied to her reproaches with gentleness; declaring his conduct should not excite such bitter resentment, since it was owing, not to his own inclination, but to his father’s.

“ In short, I soon found he had triumphed alike over her affections and her honour; and that it was merely from a wish to save her reputation, as she was in a situation to betray her indiscretion, that she consented to accept my hand.

“ Solely devoted to his own gratifications, Netley could not be restrained by any regard for the uncle, from taking advantage of the innocence of the niece. He thought too, it was fair to entrap those who had attempted to entrap him; for it was evident that Barclay had introduced him to his niece, for the express purpose of drawing him into a marriage with her; a measure, from which his proud and ambitious soul revolted, disdaining the idea of an union with any woman, who was not of illustrious birth.

“ The imprudence of Barclay gave him all the opportunities he could desire of affecting his designs...designs which he veiled under an appearance of indifference.

“ Thus did he turn against Barclay that art he had infused, in a great degree, into his mind, and foil him at his own weapons.

“ But unwilling to have a quarrel with him, as he found him necessary to his pleasure, he no sooner learned that there was a probability of his baseness being discovered by its consequences, than he contrived the scheme you are already acquainted with, to prevent any thing disagreeable from happening to himself; pretty certain of its being successful, from the admiration I involuntarily betrayed for miss Barclay. He accordingly prevailed on her to confess a partiality for me to her uncle, who, I have reason to believe, at that very moment knew the contrary, and was

well acquainted with the real state of the case, but thought it better to feign ignorance of what could not be remedied, nor even resented, without losing, in all probability, the patronage of a family, who, he yet hoped, would elevate him to the eminence he was ambitious of attaining.

"I burst upon the guilty pair with an indignation which darted in lightning from my eyes. Miss Barclay shrieked and fainted, and Netley, wildly starting from his knees, hastily exclaimed...

'Greville, you cannot pardon me!'

'Pardon thee!' I cried, with ineffable contempt; 'wretch! canst thou pardon thyself?'

"I was quitting the room, when Miss Barclay, slowly reviving, implored me to pause for a moment. I hesitated and still drew nearer to the door, when suddenly rising, she tottered towards me, and falling at my feet, implored me to have pity on her, and not publish her disgrace.

'I do not deserve your mercy...I do not deserve your compassion,' she cried; 'your generosity will therefore be greater in extending any to me. Should my uncle know what has happened, I shall be driven from his house with infamy and scorn, without having a friend, or home in the wide world to receive me! What the consequences of such desertion must be, you may easily picture to yourself. Oh! doom me not, therefore, to more dreadful horrors than I already experience! Be softened in my favour, by my solemn assurance of rejoicing, instead of regretting, your escape from the snare spread for you!'

"I told her she had nothing to apprehend from me, and abruptly retired; fearing to continue any longer in the room with my perfidious friend, lest

my indignation against him should burst into violence, that, on his father's account, I wished to avoid.

"I determined to take an eternal leave of Barclay's house the next morning. Miss Barclay heard of my preparations for departing, and had a letter conveyed to me, the purport of which was, to remind me of my promise, and conjure me not to think of returning to Kent before Netley, lest my doing so should excite inquiries that might lead to the discovery she dreaded.

"In a short answer I satisfied her on this head, informing her, that I was going upon a little tour I had long meditated, and that she might depend on the faith I had pledged to her.

"I departed, without beholding either her or Netley, and took a cold leave of Barclay.

"I prolonged my tour to a fortnight, though my mind was too much disturbed to permit me to derive any great pleasure from it : I then turned homewards. Within a few miles of sir Hugh's, I stopped to give some refreshment to my horse. I had scarcely entered the inn, when I was accosted by one of the baronet's tenants, who coming up to me, begged leave to shake me by the hand, and offer his congratulations on my at length obtaining the long promised living ; an account of the old incumbent's death having reached Netley house the preceding evening.

"The idea of immediate independence reanimated my spirits. I rejoiced to think I should no longer be obliged to live under the roof with a man I abhorred ; and speedily remounting my horse, I soon found myself at sir Hugh's.

"The family were just sitting down to dinner. I entered the parlour without hesitation, and was

eagerly approaching sir Hugh, when I felt myself suddenly chilled and transfixed by the coldness and severity of his looks. In a peremptory tone he commanded the butler, who was about placing a chair at the table for me, where I should have told you both Netley and Barclay were seated, to desist.

‘ You have no longer, sir,’ said he, directing his eyes sternly towards me, ‘ a seat at my table;.... and the only obligation you can confer upon me, or I can acknowledge from you, is that which will result from your withdrawing yourself from my house immediately.’

“ I leave you to judge what my feelings were at these words. Pride, resentment, indignation, raised a whirlwind in my soul, which shook my frame. I would have demanded.....I would have insisted on knowing the cause directly, of the indignity with which I was treated, as a common act of justice to myself, had not the swelling passions of my heart opposed my utterance, and compelled me to retire precipitately, lest I should afford a greater triumph to Barclay and Netley than I had yet done.

“ I traversed my chamber in a state bordering on distraction ; nothing, perhaps, being more agonizing, than to know we are traduced, without having the power of vindicating ourselves from the aspersions cast upon us : and such was my case. I saw I was vilified in the opinion of sir Hugh ; but, as I was confident the falsehood which had ruined me, was fabricated by his son, I knew all appeals to his justice would be unavailing.

“ Netley, in short, detested me ever since I had discovered the perfidy he meditated against me, and was consequently determined to effect my destruction. So true is this remark....

" Forgiveness to the injur'd does belong ;

" But they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong."

" Ere I had regained any degree of composure, the butler, who had been an inhabitant of the house long before I entered it, came to me.

' Ah! sir,' said he, ' I was grieved to witness the undeserved reception you met to-day ; but don't despair...innocence is, sooner or later, rewarded in this world, as well as the next, and guilt punished. Your enemies triumph now ; but, depend upon it, you will yet have the advantage of them.'

" He then proceeded to tell me, what indeed I was prepared to hear, from the behaviour of sir Hugh ; namely, that, in despite of his solemn promise to me, he had bestowed the living upon Barclay.

' Artifice and falsehood,' said he, ' have led my poor master astray ; for he has an honest heart, and would willingly do no man injustice.'

" He confirmed all my suspicions of Netley's being the person who had injured me with sir Hugh ; though, what his allegations against me were, he could not tell.

" I received two letters from him, written by my father, and their contents completed my misfortunes. The first informed me of his having failed again ; the second, of his being in a most languishing state of health, without any hope but what was derived from the prospect of my independence, and being able to support my sister, who, he had reason to think, would soon be deprived of his protection ; and concluded by mentioning the severe shock he had received from the cold manner in which sir Hugh had replied to a letter acquainting him with his misfortunes. ' He seemed to think,' said my

father, 'that I had expectations of again experiencing his generosity. Heaven knows, in encouraging such an idea, he did me the highest injustice, as I would rather perish than attempt to encroach upon my friend.'

"I resolved to lose no time in going to my father; though I grieved to think on the little comfort, or rather the increased sorrow, I should occasion him. I tried to cheer myself, however, by hoping I might find means of rendering myself serviceable to him.

"Ere I departed I wrote to sir Hugh, proudly declaring my innocence, and total unconsciousness of ever having done any thing to forfeit his friendship. I accused him of the highest injustice, in having condemned me unheard; and concluded, by protesting, if ever I found the slanders which deprived me of his good opinion, pursued me into the world, I should take such measures as the laws of my country would enable me to use, to clear my injured character, and punish my accusers, by exposing them to the open contempt they merited.

"On my arrival in London, whither I journeyed, as you may believe, with a heavy heart, I found my poor father in obscure lodgings, and almost in the last extremity. To have undeceived him at such a period as this, relative to my prospects, would have been the height of cruelty; and I had the satisfaction of thinking he died in peace, at the idea he entertained of my happy situation and ability to serve my sister, whom he recommended in the most affecting and energetic manner, to my care.

"The poor girl almost sunk beneath the shock she received on hearing of my real circumstances,



with which, after the demise of her father, I could not delay informing her. Unable to provide her a proper asylum, I exerted myself to procure her one in the house of a respectable and opulent family with whom we were connected, and luckily succeeded. I now turned my thoughts to my own destination, but, here, indeed, I was at a loss. 'Tis true, from my long residence in the house of sir Hugh, I had formed many intimacies with people of high respectability and ample power to serve me; but, to their befriending me, I was pretty confident the desertion of sir Hugh, would be an insurmountable obstacle, and therefore determined not to pain myself by making applications which I could scarcely hope would be availing. And here I involuntarily thought like Fielding...how cautious should the great be in discarding their dependants, since, in doing so, they often deprive them of the favour and countenance of the world; it being natural to suppose they must have merited this renunciation, or they would not have experienced it.

“Unable to arrange any plan; being not more unwilling to apply to the connections of my father, than to those of sir Hugh, most of them having sustained very considerable losses by his misfortunes, I wandered about in a most forlorn and melancholy manner. In the course of those wanderings, I chanced one day to behold my friend, the widow, in a little shop in the environs, of which she was the mistress; her eyes encountered mine almost at the moment I beheld her, and she instantly beckoned me in. She expressed the utmost joy at seeing me; but after her first transports were abated, she gazed at me in silence for a few minutes, and then exclaimed, in a mournful tone.....

“Alas! sir, what a pity that he, who has been so good a friend to others, should prove so bad a one to himself!”

“I entreated an explanation of these words, and she did not hesitate to inform me, that she understood I had lost the protection of sir Hugh through my own imprudence.

“In short, from the information I collected from this honest creature, which she received from the house-keeper at Netley-house, who was a kind of confidant of lady Netley’s, I was now enabled to develope the scheme which had been formed to ruin me. Netley, by a solemn promise of providing liberally for miss Barclay and her infant, and, screening her from public disgrace, prevailed upon her to lay the guilt of her seduction at my door. Her uncle affected to credit this assertion, because it was his interest to do so, as Netley assured him he should take care to make his father withdraw his favour entirely from me, and endeavour to make him some reparation for the injury I had done him, by doing for him what he had formerly intended to do for me. This was the point Barclay had long been labouring to accomplish; and so it was accomplished, he cared little by what means.

“Sir Hugh could not doubt the veracity of his son, and heard of my supposed enormity with horror. My false accusers artfully advised him to forbear from any reproaches on the subject, and also from giving me any satisfaction as to the cause of my dismissal from his house, and the alteration in his conduct.

“They, also, in order to prevent any after repentance, of miss Barclay, entangling their schemes, sent her to France, where, I learned, she died, soon after the birth of her infant.

“ Acquainted with the nature of the crime alleged against me, I was now enabled to stand forward in my own defence; but ere my vindictory letter reached sir Hugh, he had paid the last debt to Nature. All hopes from this quarter being at an end, and my prospects more forlorn than ever, the good widow, who was the confidant of my distresses, and who now found I had been basely injured, interested herself so warmly in my behalf with a literary character of her acquaintance, of respectability in his line, that I was put into a way of deriving some little advantage from my abilities; thus did she requite the little services I had formerly rendered her. I became her lodger; and, in her innocent society, often lost those melancholy thoughts which meditations on the future, and retrospections on the past, occasioned.

“ I had not been above two months in her house, when she was seized with a lingering disorder which terminated fatally. Her principal anxiety at this awful and melancholy period, was about her daughter, who still continued with her, and whose youth, inexperience, and beauty, made her mother tremble at the idea of the dangers to which she might, to which she would, in all probability, be exposed, when deprived of her protection.

“ A residence under the same roof with this young creature, her engaging attentions, and apparent amiableness, had created an interest, a tenderness for her in my heart, which nothing but the unpleasantness of my situation withheld me from divulging. One day, however, as the mother was dwelling upon the usual theme, I was unwarily led into a confession of my sentiments for her daughter, and the motives which had hitherto rendered me unwilling to reveal them.

"She heard me with surprise and delight, and explicitly declared that, were my situation still more unpleasant than it was, she should die happy if she left her child under my protection.

"You may believe I did not raise any obstacles to her wishes, nor did her daughter; and a few days before her death we were united."

From the knowledge our readers have already acquired of Mrs. Greville, it is scarcely necessary to say that Mr. Greville was utterly ignorant of her real disposition. Vain, arrogant, and ambitious, she was continually forming schemes to raise herself to the summit she sighed to obtain. Her mother, before whom she did not practise that deception she did before others, did all in her power to correct the propensities she regretted, and which were concealed with the most consummate art from the eye of casual observation; but her endeavours to do so were ineffectual, and she shuddered to think of the ills to which they might ultimately lead. To the imprudence they more than once occasioned, were already to be attributed many sorrows.

She well knew, that, to the manner in which her daughter had acted towards him, in hopes of making an honorable conquest, might in a great degree be imputed the libertine attempts of Netley, and the consequent resentment of his family; and she gladly embraced the idea of uniting her to Greville, in order to free herself from the apprehensions she entertained on her account.

To this union the young lady would scarcely have consented, in the present situation of his affairs, had she not flattered herself he would recover some of his former friends, and, by their means, be extricated from all his difficulties.

"The death of the worthy widow," continued Mr. Greville, "was speedily followed by other misfortunes, which, from being less expected, were more calculated to overwhelm us. I will not exhaust your patience by recapitulating what they were; suffice it to say, I found myself nearly deprived of the means of subsistence, and so unavoidably involved, that I dreaded every moment the loss of liberty.

"Perhaps you cannot well picture a situation much more distressing or deplorable than was mine at this juncture. I not only found myself almost at the lowest ebb of fortune, but saw the woman, whom I tenderly loved, destitute of the comforts essentially necessary for her. Yet, still I did not suffer myself to sink into despair; and my hope and confidence in heaven were rewarded.

"By means, not more unexpected than sudden, I was relieved from my embarrassments. A convincing proof, that oft

"When Fortune means most good to men,

"She looks upon them with a threatening eye."

"From that period I have led a tranquil and a happy life, unenvying and unenvied by the great; and with truth may say, without ever breathing a sigh at the narrowness of my fortune, till I felt prevented by it, from obeying the dictates of friendship.

"But I not only hope, but believe, that the delay of your wishes will add to your happiness when they are completed; for, trust me, felicity is never so thoroughly enjoyed, as when it has succeeded pain and disappointment. But, my dear young friend, be not rash...be not too impetuous in the pursuit of those measures which you think may accomplish it.

“Precipitancy more frequently retards, than forwards our designs. I know you will excuse what I say, particularly when I assure you any advice I offer, is not dictated by an idea of superior understanding, but superior experience.

“Young, undesigning, and ardent, you are now, for the first time, about launching into the world, your own uncontrouled master...into a world where snares of the most destructive nature are continually spread for people of your temper, which it requires the utmost circumspection to avoid. On the counsels of your heart keep a continual watch. In your disclosures be reserved. Confide not in professions, till you have some proof of the sincerity of those who utter them; and, above all, let not brilliant talents allure you into society you know to be unworthy of your esteem. For in admiring, we too often cease to condemn...and what we cease to condemn, it is not unnatural to suppose, we may be led to copy.”

Egbert felt truly grateful for the solicitude Mr. Greville manifested for his welfare. He acknowledged his advice was well applied to him, as he had an impetuosity in his temper, too apt to hurry him away, and prevent the proper exercise of his judgment; but, henceforth, he protested his determination of trying to restrain it, from a full conviction of the errors and unhappiness it might otherwise lead him into.

---

CHAP. IV.

---

" There's such sweet pain in parting,  
" That I could hang forever on thy arms,  
" And look away my life into thy eyes !"

OTWAY.

---

THE shadows of evening were now descending fast. Greville and Egbert returned to the village. In their way thither, Greville gratified the curiosity of Egbert, by informing him, that Barclay did not long enjoy the living he had obtained so basely ; and that Netley, neither improved by age nor by experience, still lived unhonoured, and would, in all probability, die unlamented. He also told him, that the person whose anonymous warning had saved him from the artifices of his false friend, was a servant who attended them both to college.

On a little verdant mount, at the extremity of Greville's garden, between two high and spreading trees, a rustic bench was placed, " o'er-canopied by luscious woodbine." It commanded a view of the village, and an extensive and variegated prospect, too romantic for the eye of taste ever to be weary of viewing. In this retreat, which he had long dedicated to love and friendship, Mr. Greville particularly delighted. Here he loved to listen to the hummings of his bees, whose

hives were ranged on either side ; and here he cultivated the choicest flowers ;....so that it, like

“ Pomona’s arbour smil’d,  
“ With flow’rets decked, and fragrant smells.”

It was here that Egbert found Jacintha waiting his return.

The lingering sunbeams were now dying away upon the summits of the distant mountains, and all was becoming a dreary scene, uncertain if beheld ; when the moon, rising from behind a thickly wooded hill, “ unveiled her peerless light,” and touched the surrounding prospects with a meekness of colouring, which softened and increased their beauties. The various sounds which had fluctuated on the air by day were now over ; the flocks had ceased their bleatings ; the village murmur was become faint and indistinct, and the song of the nightingale alone prevailed throughout the woods, whilst

“ The beetle, with his drowsy hum,  
“ Rrung the first watch of night ; and  
“ —————oft, with careless wing,  
“ Brush’d the dew from many a weeping flow’r.”

The softness and stillness of the scene were not, by any means, calculated to dispel the melancholy which had taken possession of the mind of Egbert and Jacintha ; on the contrary, they revived a thousand tender remembrances in their minds, which at once tortured and afflicted.

“ Oh, Egbert !” exclaimed Jacintha, in reply to the arguments he used, at once to conceal his own dejection and try to lessen her’s ; “ Oh, Egbert ! you will enjoy comparative happiness compared to me. New pursuits, new society, cannot fail of subduing, or at least diverting your sadness ;



but here, amidst scenes, among objects so familiar to us both, how can I hope to conquer mine?"

"By the efforts of reason," said Egbert; "which must convince you of the little probability there is of a long separation between us."

"Oh! could I hope it would be a short one," cried Jacintha, "how lightened should I feel. But I dread your persevering in the enterprise you have undertaken, regardless of difficulties or dangers. I fear that, even if you recovered part of your property, you would still delay your return, in hopes of regaining the whole, however distant or uncertain the prospect of doing so appeared."

Egbert assured her this apprehension was groundless; and that it was his fixed determination, if he beheld little likelihood of his exertions being crowned with success, to return to Europe immediately, in order to try and devote them to some better purpose.

A long and interesting conversation now took place, in the course of which, Egbert mentioned some ideas which had been suggested by her father and himself relative to his future destination, in case he found it impossible to recover what was lost. Several matters too, which neither he nor Jacintha had before spoken of, from an unwillingness to touch upon the moment of departure, were now finally arranged. Egbert made Jacintha solemnly promise to inform him of every thing which happened to her during his absence; and she, in her turn, insisted upon his being equally unreserved in his communications.

Most reluctantly they rose to obey a summons to supper. Ere they returned to the house, Jacintha made Egbert pause to observe a group of villagers, who had just assembled, as was fre-

quently their custom, upon a little "moonlight glade" adjacent to the inn, to dance to the simple music of the harp. The loud shouts of laughter, which resounded on every side, proved that the feelings of their hearts were in perfect unison with the lively strains to which they kept time.

"Here, Egbert," said Jacintha, who still feared that, notwithstanding all his protestations to the contrary, he might be induced, by the ardent desire she knew he felt, of placing her in a situation more elevated than she had hitherto been in, to prolong his stay in the West-Indies, if there was the least chance, however remote, of recovering his fortune; "here, Egbert," said she, pressing her hand upon his arm, "is a convincing proof that wealth is not absolutely essential to felicity. Can imagination picture to itself, in any station, greater happiness than is experienced by these rustics? and yet they are not more ignorant of luxuries, than destitute of the means of obtaining them.

"Of the shortness of life you yourself have spoken. Waste not, therefore, its fleeting moments in toiling after riches, which we see may be done without; and which, perhaps, instead of adding to its enjoyments, might mar them. For too often, I believe, our wishes increase in proportion to our supposed power of gratifying them, till at length they become uncontrollable, and consequently tormenting."

"Oh, my Jacintha!" cried Egbert, who perfectly comprehended the meaning of this speech, gazing upon her pale face, now "combating 'tween smiles and tears," and clasping her to his bosom as he spoke, "canst thou, not less lovely than beloved, imagine I would waste moments, which

might be devoted to thee, in idle pursuits ; or delay, an instant longer than is necessary, a return which, I trust, will put me in possession of my most ardent wishes ?”

A second summons now obliged them to hasten to the house. They found Woodville and his sister in the parlour. A heavy cloud hung upon every brow, except upon Mrs. Greville's and Gertrude's, which no efforts could dissipate ; and at an early hour the little party broke up.

Egbert had been advised, both by Mr. Greville and Woodville, to avoid taking any particular leave of Jacintha, which, they assured him, could only be productive of pain ; he accordingly promised, though with infinite reluctance, to set off in the morning, without seeing her.

But when they were about separating for the night, his emotions nearly betrayed his intention. He seized her hands as she was quitting the room, and pressing them with the most passionate fondness to his lips and bosom, imperfectly articulated something like a farewell. A significant glance from Mr. Greville suddenly restored him to recollection, and he immediately permitted her to retire ; still persuaded that he did not mean to depart till after breakfast the next morning.

By the first glimpse of day Egbert stole from his chamber, where he had passed a sleepless night, and quitted the house without meeting any of the family, having previously taken a most affectionate leave of Mr. Greville.

Punctual to the hour, he saw Woodville approaching at the instant he left the house, and they proceeded together to the bridge, where, as had been settled, they found the groom with their horses.

Here Egbert involuntarily paused, and looked back. He seemed to want resolution to tear himself from a place, which contained all that was dear to him in life. Something like a gloomy presentiment of ill pervaded his mind, which he condemned himself for weakness in indulging, yet had not power to shake off. Once more he wished to have folded Jacintha to his heart.... once more he wished to have heard her repeat assurances of eternal constancy and truth, almost persuading himself he should not have felt so unhappy if he had taken that leave his heart dictated.

The melancholy appearance of every thing at this early hour, contributed not a little to increase his dejection. The shadows of night were as yet but imperfectly withdrawn. No spiral smoke ascending from amidst the tufted trees, which embosomed the cottages on the green, proclaimed the rising of the children of industry and labour. A few straggling sheep, nibbling the wet grass, were the only animated objects to be seen.

"This dreary prospect resembles mine at present," thought Egbert; "but the resemblance will not long continue. A bright and glorious sun will soon dispel the gloominess of this; but days, nay months, must elapse, ere I can hope for any change in mine!"

"Come, Oswald," cried Woodville, who began to suspect he meant to delay his departure till he had seen Jacintha, and who wished to prevent an interview which could not fail, he was sure, of causing additional pain to both; "the morning air is cold and damp: we shall be quite chilled if we stand here any longer."

Egbert laid his hand upon his horse, as if going to mount ; then again pausing, he once more directed his eyes towards Jacintha's window.

" Farewel, my love !" he inwardly exclaimed. " May peace, may health, may happiness, be thine !....and may we meet, even sooner than we expect, to part no more !"

Then vaulting into the saddle, he instantly rode off, and soon lost sight of Wyefield and its environs.

---

---

CHAP. V.

---

---

“ When thy lov’d sight shall bless my eyes again,  
“ Then will I own, I ought not to complain;  
“ Since that sweet hour is worth whole years of pain.”

---

---

JACINTHA was deeply affected when she found Egbert had departed without seeing her ; but, as soon as she had somewhat recovered from the shock the intelligence gave her, the arguments of her father in some degree reconciled her to his having acted in this manner, by convincing her that contrary conduct would only have been productive of additional pain to both.

She now exerted herself to bear with patience a separation that could not be avoided, and encouraged, as much as possible, hopes of its being a short one.

Egbert, according to his promise, was punctual in writing to her during his continuance in England. His last letter, written the very hour he was embarking, was brought to her by Woodville, after an absence of a fortnight, and contained the most fervent declarations of affection, and solemn assurances of expediting, as much as possible, his return.

About a week after he had sailed, Mr. Greville was agreeably surprised, by receiving a letter from his sister, Mrs. Decourcy, who had been absent

many years in the East-Indies, informing him that she and Mr. Decourcy were arrived in England, and proposed paying him an almost immediate visit.

These tidings gave sincere pleasure to Mr. Greville; their long separation not having diminished the tender affection he felt for his sister, whom he had despaired of ever seeing again.

They also diffused a general joy throughout his family. Jacintha was truly pleased at the idea of being introduced to a relation of whom she had heard so amiable, so interesting a character; and Mrs. Greville and Gertrude were delighted to think of the consequence they should derive from the approaching visit; not doubting, that it would give their neighbours an opportunity of judging, in some degree, of the immense wealth of Mr. Decourcy. Nor were they less charmed at the thoughts of the handsome presents, which from former acts of generosity, they had every reason to believe, they should receive on the present occasion.

These agreeable hopes and expectations almost obliterated the grief which Gertrude felt for the departure of captain Bellamy; who, with lord Gwytherin, and all his lordship's visitors, had quitted the park in the middle of the week, and who, during his continuance there, had contrived to make a deep impression upon her heart; from which, however, he was prevented deriving any advantage, not more by the circumspection of her father, than the vigilance of her mother, whom pride rendered prudent, and who perceiving his designs, took care to guard against them. But though all hopes of obtaining the victory he had meditated were over, he did not depart with-

out taking a very tender leave of Gertrude, protesting he meant to have married her privately, and

“ That if Jove had set him in the place of Atlas,  
“ And laid the weight of heaven and gods upon him,”

he could not have been more oppressed than he was at the idea of parting from her.

A few days after he had the pleasure of hearing from her, Mr. Greville had the superior pleasure of embracing his sister. Though the bloom of youth was over, the elegance of her person, the regularity of her features, the sweetness and animation of her countenance, still rendered Mrs. Decourcy a most attractive object. Nor were her manners less calculated to please and captivate, than her appearance. Frank, cheerful, and obliging, they evinced her disposition to be candid, generous and humane.

The figure and deportment of Mr. Decourcy were commanding. His understanding was strong, and highly cultivated, and he was neither destitute of sensibility nor benevolence; but there was a haughtiness, a reserve, a kind of sternness in his temper, which, in a great measure, overshadowed the more amiable qualities of his mind. Incapable himself of deviating from the strictest integrity, or intentionally injuring any person, he could find little excuse in his own mind for the misconduct of others. His rigid notions of honour could at all times overcome his humanity; and, altogether, he was a man much more calculated to engage esteem, than conciliate affection.

He formed but few attachments, and never dissolved any without being able to assign a sufficient cause for doing so. That for his wife was



infinitely more fervent than perhaps might be supposed, from the description we have given of him. He loved her indeed with a tenderness that might almost have been called romantic, and she was *deserving* of the passion she had inspired. Yet, notwithstanding their mutual affection, their affluent fortune, their extensive power of conferring benefits, they were not truly happy. They served to prove, what daily experience must confirm, that felicity is never perfect in this life; and that it is only in a better and a future world, we can hope to enjoy it without interruption or diminution.

By the few, and they were but a few, who knew of their disquietudes or regrets (for they were as little ostentatious in their griefs as in their charities), the death of their children was the supposed source from whence they originated; but there was a *secret* cause not more carefully concealed than unsuspected.

The pride and vanity of Mrs. Greville were highly gratified by the elegant style in which they travelled to Wyefield; but here was another convincing proof that unalloyed happiness is not to be attained in this state. That which she experienced on the present occasion, was considerably lessened by the departure of the fashionable folks from the castle, without even knowing of her connections to people of such fortune and consequence as her present visiters. There was also another, and a still more poignant cause for regret and mortification. Mrs. Decourcy shewed a decided preference for Jacintha, which not all the artful insinuations of this, her supposed mother, could prevent.

Mrs. Decourcy knew her sister-in-law too well to be biassed by her ; though she was too amiable, and too sincerely attached to her brother to attempt communicating, or even hinting to him the opinion she entertained of his wife. Ignorance, in some respects, she believed, essential to happiness.

The heart of Jacintha glowed with gratitude for her attentions. They gave her the most exquisite pleasure, not from any idea of the triumph they afforded her over her mother and sister, but from the pride, the delight, she felt at being thought worthy of the regard, the particular notice of a person she herself so highly esteemed and admired.

Mrs. Greville exerted all her talents to entertain her guests, who, by their manner, gave her reason to believe she had not exerted herself in vain. It was evident, however, that their principal gratification, in regard to amusement, was derived from excursions about the neighbourhood, and particularly into Wales. In these excursions they were accompanied by Woodville and his sister, who, I have already said, were related to Mr. Decourcy, and very graciously received by him, on his arrival at Wyefield.

At the expiration of a month they talked of departing. Jacintha heard them with regret. She was now too much attached to Mrs. Decourcy to think of a separation without sorrow ; besides, she felt, that in losing her society, she should lose a charm which had diverted the sadness that oppressed her heart ever since Egbert quitted Wyefield, notwithstanding all her efforts to conquer it.

She was also perfectly aware that the presence of Mrs. Decourcy was her only shield against the persecutions of her mother and sister, who, she clearly perceived, were irritated to the highest pitch of malignancy, against her, in consequence of the partiality Mrs. Decourcy had manifested for her.

These painful reflections and apprehensions completely vanquished the cheerfulness she had forced herself to assume : spiritless and sad, her countenance denoted the dejection of her mind. How agreeably, how delightfully, was this dejection dispelled, by an invitation from Mrs. Decourcy to accompany her to town, and reside with her till her union with Egbert (of whom Mr. Greville had fully spoken to his sister) should take place. Mr. Decourcy seconded it with as much warmth as he generally displayed ; and Mr. Greville, who appeared infinitely more pleased than surprised, instantly granted Jacintha permission to accept it.

To give an adequate idea of Mrs. Greville's feelings upon this occasion, is utterly impossible. The rage she felt at Jacintha's being the object of attraction both to Egbert and lord Gwytherin, was faint, compared to what she now experienced at her being taken under the protection of Mrs. Decourcy.

The agitation of her mind was discernible in her countenance ; but, though she trembled with passion and resentment, she was prevented by selfish motives from giving either utterance. But the restraint she imposed upon herself before Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, she made herself ample amends for when alone with her husband. The dissimulation she had so long practised then gave

way, and her envy and jealousy relative to Jacintha were openly manifested.

"She has entered my family," she exclaimed, scarcely articulate from passion, "to be the bane of all my hopes and expectations. Only for her artifices, I am sure Gertrude would have been preferred to her by Mrs. Decourcy. But she shall not enjoy her protection. No, Mr. Greville, she shall not triumph over my daughter. I will inform your sister she is no connection of our's.... common justice must then induce her to change her attentions in favour of Gertrude."

"You err in thinking so," said Mr. Greville. "Justice, if she attends to it, must influence her to persevere in any kind intentions she may have formed for Jacintha."

"My suspicions, then," cried Mrs. Greville, with eagerness, "are well founded."

"No," replied Mr. Greville, in a calm and rather solemn voice, "they are not. I know the nature of your suspicions. I know, from former hints, you doubt my innocence respecting miss Barclay, and believe Jacintha to be her child and mine. A perfect knowledge of my disposition had long since, I hoped, triumphed over these unjust suspicions. I cannot express the grief I feel at finding myself disappointed. Many men, in a similar situation, might yield to resentment; but I can only regret not being sufficiently happy to obtain the esteem of my wife, after an union of so many years."

"You wrong me," said Mrs. Greville, who began to fear she had seriously offended him; and as she knew, his displeasure was not easily provoked, so neither was it easily allayed.

"No," cried Mr. Greville, "I do not wrong you....for how is it possible you can esteem the man whose veracity you doubt? Nay more, how is it possible you can bring up your children to respect a father, whose integrity you yourself suspect?"

"Dear me," said Mrs. Greville, bursting into tears, "how cruel to speak in such a manner! I am sure it was in consequence of what you yourself said, that I dropt the unfortunate hint, which seems to have offended you so much. It was natural to suppose there must be some connection between you and Jacintha, else why should she have a claim upon the kindness of Mrs. Decourcy, which your words certainly implied she had?"

"Rest satisfied," said Mr. Greville, "with hearing me again most solemnly protest, Jacintha is no way related to me or mine."

"Why then speak in such a manner?" asked Mrs. Greville; her apprehensions of his displeasure yielding to her curiosity.

"I cannot answer the inquiry," replied Mr. Greville. "I therefore request you may not repeat it."

"Very well, sir," answered Mrs. Greville; "but I am sure, if you complain of not obtaining my esteem, I have an equal right to complain of not obtaining your confidence; by this time, I think, I might have been thought worthy of learning the secret relative to Jacintha's birth."

"Nothing could excuse my divulging it," said Mr. Greville, "after the solemn promise I made to keep it; and except the restrictions laid upon me to preserve it should be withdrawn, of which there is little probability, it must descend with me to the grave."

"But come, my dear," continued he, taking her hand, and evidently wishing to change the subject, "compose yourself. Let not envy and jealousy disturb the tranquillity of your bosom. They are malignant guests, not more destructive to the virtue and generosity, than to the peace of those who harbour them. Jacintha is an amiable girl, deserving of the kindness of my sister; which, I am convinced, she has acquired merely from the innocent attractions of her manner."

Much more he said to convince her, that as Mrs. Decourcy regarded Jacintha for her own merit, she would not be induced to forego any intentions she had formed in her favour, by learning she was not their offspring.

Mrs. Greville, though no philosopher, after a little consideration, thought it expedient to submit with calmness to what was inevitable; the storm consequently blew over without doing any mischief.

Two days after the above conversation, Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, accompanied by Jacintha, departed for London; as also did miss Woodville and her brother, so that a very pleasant travelling party was formed.

As the hour of separation approached, the tenderness of Jacintha's heart completely overcame the involuntary resentment her mother and sister's injurious conduct towards her had excited, and she would have taken a most affectionate leave of them, had not the repulsive coldness of their manner prevented her.

Greville, as if to make amends for that coldness, pressed her to his bosom with the warmest tenderness, and bestowed a fervent blessing on her. Notwithstanding the joy she felt at being

delivered from the capricious tyranny of her mother, she could not quit a place where she had lived so long....a place endeared to her by the remembrance of the happy hours spent in it with her beloved Egbert, without an emotion of regret, which filled her eyes with tears. The kind attentions and pleasant conversation of her companions, however, soon subdued these painful feelings.

The third morning from the commencement of their journey, the travellers were set down at Mr. Decourcy's lodgings in Piccadilly, the house he had taken in St. James's Square not being yet ready for his reception.

From hence Mr. Woodville and his sister proceeded to Mortlake, where their aunt, Mrs. Derwent, resided, at whose house Woodville had promised to pass the ensuing winter.

---

CHAP. VI.

---

“ Now cold despair  
“ To livid paleness turns the glowing red.”

---

MRS. DERWENT, the half-sister of Mr. Decourcy, was by no means pleased to hear that a relation of Mrs. Decourcy's was in future to reside under her roof. It was a circumstance that made her apprehensive he felt a preference for her family, which might prove highly detrimental to the interests of his own; a consideration that gave her extreme uneasiness, as her niece, miss Woodville, the only being on earth whom she really regarded, required an addition to her fortune, which she had not the power of making to it, though her jointure was considerable, as an ungovernable passion for shew and expence induced her to live up to the full amount of it.

She was too great an adept, however, in the arts of dissimulation, to discover the jealous eye with which she looked upon Jacintha; nor in any instance did she betray a deficiency of esteem and affection for Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy.

Miss Woodville appeared *equally* fervent in her regard; whether it was more sincere, is a point hereafter to be ascertained.



Woodville, who never spoke but as he thought ; who never professed what he did not feel, unlike his aunt and sister, could not avoid making a distinction in the attentions he paid to Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy....the former he coldly esteemed, the latter he warmly admired.

This distinction either was not noticed by Mr. Decourcy, or purposely overlooked by him, in consequence of his ardent affection for his wife, whose merit he allowed infinitely exceeded his own, and whom he deemed entitled to superior homage.

Though this was neither a gay nor a fashionable time of the year to be in London, there was sufficient in the novelty of every thing about her to afford amusement to Jacintha ; who could scarcely be persuaded that they did not mean to impose upon her simplicity, when they told her (perhaps the very moment she was preparing for a round of entertainments, or almost felt her head giddy, from the crouds which had been passing and repassing, during the day, before the windows) that the town was quite dull and deserted at present.

After a residence of three weeks in the metropolis, during which she saw every thing worthy of notice, or that could entertain her, she accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy into Hertfordshire, whither they went to visit a seat which was advertised for sale.

They took up their quarters in Hertford, the seat being situated near that town. They found it perfectly agreeing with the description given of it...a description which had pleased them highly. Mr. Decourcy, therefore, did not long deliberate about becoming the purchaser ; and, as the house was ready for the immediate reception of his family, he soon took possession of it.

Highly as Jacintha had been amused in London, she was not sorry to find herself again in the country. Habit and disposition had attached her to it; for in rural scenes there is a soothing tranquillity, which cannot fail of pleasing a mind of sensibility.

Mr. Decourcy's new mansion was a noble structure, superbly furnished, and surrounded by extensive pleasure-grounds, beautifully laid out, and watered by a branch of the river Lea.

The landscapes Jacintha had been accustomed to contemplate, had more of awful grandeur in them than those she now beheld; but pastoral beauty here amply made up for the want of sublimity.

The rich and mellow tints of autumn were now diffused over the woods, the fields stood thick with corn, the harvest-horn sounded in every direction, and the whole country presented scenes of joyous industry, truly delightful to the benevolent heart.

The Decourcys were visited by all the respectable families in their neighbourhood, and a very pleasant society was soon established. Their time, therefore, glided away most agreeably in visiting, making excursions about the country, and projecting improvements in their new domain.

But no amusement, no avocation, could render them, particularly Mrs. Decourcy, forgetful of the claims of poverty, or the obligations laid upon her by the bounty of Providence to benefit others; her charities, however, were without parade or ostentation. Like the fostering dews of heaven, they were distributed in silence and secrecy to those they nourished.

Jacintha's esteem and affection for her daily increased; for scarcely a day passed in which she had not some new cause for admiration and grati-

tude. But the regard she felt for Mr. Decourcy, bore no proportion to that she felt for Mrs. Decourcy. Neither time nor intimacy subdued the reserve of his manner....a reserve which chilled all the warm, the glowing feelings, the real kindness of his actions were calculated to inspire.

The latter end of autumn, the Woodvilles, accompanied by Mrs. Derwent, paid a visit to Beech Grove, the seat of Mr. Decourcy. Three months had now elapsed since the departure of Egbert, and Jacintha was becoming not only anxious, but impatient, to hear some tidings of him. The uneasiness occasioned by this anxiety and impatience was happily relieved, ere Woodville left the country, by a packet from her father, enclosing letters from Egbert to her and Woodville, the purport of which were, to inform them of his safe arrival in Jamaica ; his having there received such particulars as he required to know relative to the agent, and the pleasing prospect he beheld of being able to recover at least part of his property, and return to England sooner than he at first imagined he could have done. He desired these letters might be answered immediately, though at the same time he hinted the probability there was of his not receiving them directly on their reaching the place of destination, as the business he was engaged in, would most likely oblige him to change continually.

Jacintha obeyed his request with transport. She gave him a faithful narrative, according to her promise, of all that had happened to her since his departure, and fully expatiated on the happiness of her present situation, from a conviction of the pleasure she should impart to him by doing so.

But the delightful tranquillity diffused over her mind by his letter, was soon interrupted by the illness of Mrs. Decourcy. Two days after her visitors had left her, she was confined to her bed. Jacintha now became her constant attendant, and, by her tenderness and assiduity, amply repaid the kindness she had experienced from her.

Mr. Decourcy, not more alarmed than distressed by the illness of his wife, was truly sensible of any attentions that had a chance of mitigating it, and expressed high obligations to Jacintha for her conduct; who shrunk from receiving acknowledgments, which her gratitude could not permit her to think herself entitled to.

Mrs. Decourcy continued a week in extreme danger. At the expiration of that period the disorder came to a crisis, and a visible change then took place for the better.

She had just fallen asleep one morning, and Jacintha was reading by the bed-side, when a servant softly opened the door, and beckoned her from the room.

"My master wishes to speak to you directly, in the parlour, miss," said the maid.

Jacintha immediately descended to it, and was seized with a sudden panic the moment she entered it, in consequence of the discomposure of Mr. Decourcy's countenance, which she could not possibly account for; having left him but a few minutes before, rejoicing at the favourable report which the physician had made that morning, of Mrs. Decourcy.

"I hope you have not heard any unpleasant tidings, sir," said she, tremblingly approaching him.

He motioned for her to take a seat, and looking from her to the table on which he leaned, appeared at a loss how to answer.

The idea of Egbert was ever uppermost in the mind of Jacintha; and perceiving a newspaper upon the table, it instantly occurred to her that it contained some dreadful tidings from the West-Indies, in which he was mentioned as a sufferer. No sooner was this thought suggested, than, without giving herself time to reflect how very improbable it was that, had such been the case, Mr. Decourcy, in the present situation of his family, would have permitted her to obtain a knowledge of it, she started wildly from her chair, and caught up the paper.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Decourcy, rising, and evidently alarmed by her manner.

"Oh! tell me," cried she, almost breathless with terror, "has any thing happened to him?"

"To whom?" asked Mr. Decourcy.

"To Egbert...to Mr. Oswald," replied she.

"Nothing that I know of. But, my dear Jacintha," continued Mr. Decourcy, with something like reproach in his voice and countenance, "is Mr. Oswald your only friend? You have relations...you have parents...a tender, and indulgent father."

"Ah!" cried Jacintha, starting, and clasping her hands together, "what of my dear father?"

Mr. Decourcy put a letter into her hand, which he said he had received but a few minutes before, and Jacintha read as follows:

TO GEORGE DECOURCY, ESQ.

Wyefield, Nov. ....

"SIR,

"It is with extreme concern I break in upon your domestic happiness, with the distressing intelligence of your worthy brother-in-law's illness; but the alarming state which he is now in, very little hopes being entertained of his recovery, renders it necessary to apprise his friends of his danger. You can better imagine than I describe the anguish of his wife and children, at the near prospect they behold of losing the most tender of husbands and of fathers.

"Their neighbours sincerely sympathize in their grief, for his virtues have rendered him universally beloved. But, alas! common sympathy can do little towards alleviating affliction like their's. If you, sir, and your amiable lady, could make it convenient to come down to Wyefield, your presence, I am confident, would do more than any thing else could do, to support and console the unhappy family. With respectful compliments to the ladies,

"I remain, sir,

"your obedient and very

"humble servant,

"J. JONES."

"This is no time for the indulgence of grief," said Mr. Decourcy, on seeing Jacintha weeping in an agony over the letter; "exertion is requisite. At all times, the best proof we can give of our regard for those we love, is by making efforts to serve them. You must set out directly for Wyefield; and be assured, nothing but the situation

of your aunt, should prevent me from accompanying you thither."

He said he would himself break the melancholy tidings of her father's illness to Mrs. Decourcy, whom, he declared, he could not permit her to see before her departure, lest her emotions should agitate her. He desired her to be expeditious in preparing for her journey, in which, he said, his housekeeper should accompany her.

Jacintha hastened to her chamber, and soon exchanged her present dress for a travelling one. Mr. Decourcy presented her with a pocket-book, containing bank notes to a pretty considerable amount; and charged either her or the housekeeper to write immediately upon their arrival at Wyefield; promising, in his turn, not to delay acquainting Jacintha with every thing she could desire to know respecting her aunt.

They proceeded to St. Albans in Mr. Decourcy's chaise, and pursued the remainder of their journey in hired carriages.

It was now the gloomy month of November; and every thing seemed changed since Jacintha had, a few short months before, travelled the same road. But the alteration in the appearance of nature was not greater than was the difference between her feelings now and at that period; and never, perhaps, had she been so thoroughly convinced of the mutability of earthly happiness, as at the present moment.

They travelled with such expedition, that, on the second night of their journey, they reached Wyefield. The heart of Jacintha beat with redoubled violence when, from the summit of a hill, she beheld the faint glimmering of the village lights, and reflected that, in a few minutes, her

Dreadful apprehensions would either be confirmed or removed. Trembling and agitated, she leaned for a minute against the garden-gate, on alighting from the chaise, in order to try and recover a little composure ere she entered the house, to which her eyes were eagerly directed.

Darkness and silence seemed to reign within it, nor did the external scene appear less dismal and dreary. The night was dull and dark. The heavy clouds rested on the distant hills. No trembling star, no moon, looked from the sky. The wind was up in the wood, and whistled through its leafless branches. The stream of the valley murmured as if impeded in its course ; and from the tree at the grave of the dead, the long-howling owl was heard. Shivering and sad, Jacintha approached the door, and knocking softly at it, was almost immediately admitted by Gillian.



---

 CHAP. VII.
 

---

"Death ends our woes,  
"And the kind grave shuts up the mournful scene."

DRYDEN.

---

THE looks of Gillian were not expressive of any surprise at beholding Jacintha. Instead, however, of answering her eager, though faltering inquiries, she continued at the door.

"For whom are you looking?" said Jacintha, perceiving she did not close it.

"Why, lauk a mercy, for Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, sure!"

"They have not come to Wyefield," said Jacintha.

"Dear a me, how sorry I be to hear so! It will be grievous things for my poor a' sus," continued she, gently shutting the door, and leading the way into the parlour, which appeared dreary and deserted, though a decayed fire still glimmered within it.

"Tell me of my father!" exclaimed Jacintha.

Gillian laid down the candle, and raised her apron to her eyes.

"Tell me, tell me," cried Jacintha, "if what I fear has come to pass?"

Gillian shook her head, and turned away.

The melancholy truth now burst upon Jacintha. Her heart sunk beneath the shock it gave her,

and she would have fallen to the ground, had not the house-keeper caught her in her arms. By the aid of restoratives, which the affrighted Gillian hastily procured, her senses were gradually recovered. The house-keeper then exerted all the eloquence she was mistress of, to try and reconcile her to the event which had taken place; but the common-place arguments she made use of, had no effect upon Jacintha. She wept in agony, and her affliction for her father was, if possible, increased by her having arrived too late to receive his last blessing.

"Lauk a mercy, miss," said Gillian, on hearing her express this regret; "I am sure you should be glad, instead of sorry, that you were not here. It was the most melancholiest thing in the world to see the poor dear soul a dying. To be sure, if ever there was a saint upon earth, he was one. He was so quiet, so good-natured through all his sickness, though he knew he could never recover."

"Oh, my dearest father!" cried Jacintha, as she cast her eyes around the room, which revived in her remembrance a thousand tender recollections of his goodness and indulgence to her, "why was I not with you? Had I entertained the smallest apprehension of what has now happened, nothing should have tempted me hence. Oh! little did I imagine, when in this room, this very spot, you bade me farewell, and blessed me, that it was a last farewell....a last blessing I was receiving!"

She asked when he died, and was informed on the preceding day. She inquired in the tenderest manner about her mother and Gertrude, who, judging from her own feelings, she concluded to

be under the heaviest affliction, and for whom she felt a sympathy that revived all the affection she had once borne them, and only ceased to experience, in consequence of their unkindness.

Gillian informed her they were indeed in very great sorrow; and that, worn out by fatigue, as were also all the rest of the family, they had retired to their chamber at a very early hour.

The house-keeper now urged Jacintha not to delay any longer endeavouring to obtain some rest, and offered to pass the night with her; an offer which Jacintha accepted, and they were conducted to a chamber, which, as it had been prepared for Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, was extremely comfortable.

Jacintha's mind was too much disturbed and distressed to permit her to sleep. She spent the night in tears; and rising at the first glimpse of day, stole from the chamber, without being observed by her companion, to visit the remains of her father.

With a trembling hand she opened the door of the room in which they were deposited...with still greater emotion she approached the bed upon which they were laid. She shuddered and involuntarily shrunk back, as her eyes first fell upon them; then again drawing near the bed, she gazed upon the pale countenance of him she had supposed her father. Neither sickness nor death had deprived it of its benignancy; but for the hollow eyes, the colourless lips, it might have been supposed he was in a profound sleep.

Jacintha, as if deluding her imagination with this idea, scarcely breathed or moved for some minutes; then kissing the icy lips, her tears burst forth anew, and kneeling down, she implored his

departed spirit, if it still hovered over this earthly scene, to pardon all he had ever deemed amiss in her conduct. The little inadvertencies and errors into which youth and inexperience might have led her; for of ever having intentionally offended him, her heart acquitted her. Oh! what comfort did she derive from that acquittal! Could she now have reproached herself with ever having wilfully caused him pain—now, that it was beyond her power to make the smallest atonement for doing so, how dreadfully agonizing would have been her feelings!

Utterly absorbed in grief, she remained kneeling by the bed-side, till roused by the house-keeper; who, on missing her, had instantly risen, and was directed by Gillian to the chamber, whither she naturally concluded she was gone.

She informed Jacintha that her mother and sister were in the parlour, impatient to see her. Jacintha longed to have the first interview with them over, and with another lingering look at the pale countenance which had so often beamed with kindness and benevolence upon her, she quitted the room, and descended to the parlour.

On entering, the tears she had tried to suppress, gushed in torrents from her, and with expanded arms she flew to throw herself upon the bosom of her mother, who, with miss Gertrude, was seated at the head of the breakfast-table; but this Mrs. Greville prevented her from doing, by extending one hand to keep her at a distance, while with the other she pulled out her handkerchief to cover her face, as did Gertrude at the same instant.

Shocked by this conduct, which was not more cruel than unexpected, for affliction, Jacintha ima-

gined, could not fail of softening the heart of her mother, she threw herself, sobbing and trembling, upon a chair.

"Ah, miss!" cried Mrs. Greville, after the silence of a few minutes, "you may well lament, indeed," slowly withdrawing the handkerchief from her face as she spoke; "for you have lost a real friend!"

Jacintha clasped her hands together.

"But what is your grief compared to poor Gertrude's and mine?" cried she (here Gertrude, who had also uncovered her face, sighed, and attempted to look sorrowful); "for, according to the laws of nature, you cannot feel as she and I do, on the present occasion."

Jacintha, ignorant as she was of what this speech alluded to, could only suppose it was meant to insinuate that she did not possess so great a portion of sensibility as her mother and sister...an insinuation which only hurt her, as it tended to prove she was still as little regarded as ever by them; and one of the most ardent wishes of her heart was, to live upon terms of amity and affection with such near relations.

"So, Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy would not condescend to come down?" cried Mrs. Greville, after pausing a moment, to try whether Jacintha would make any reply to what she had just said. "Their refusing to do so, does not agree with the professions of regard they made for their poor brother."

"Good heaven! madam," exclaimed Jacintha, who now felt a degree of resentment, which the former words of Mrs. Greville had failed of inspiring; "you wrong them if you doubt the sincerity of their professions."

She then proceeded to explain the situation of Mrs. Decourcy at the time Mr. Jones's letter arrived.

"Well, I am glad to hear their not coming does not proceed from a want of regard," said Mrs. Greville; "for nothing hurts one so much, particularly in the hour of affliction, as unkindness and neglect from those with whom we are connected."

"Nothing, indeed," said Jacintha, emphatically, and looking expressively at her mother as she spoke. Mrs. Greville either did not, or would not, pretend to understand the meaning of these glances; and, after asking a few trifling questions of Jacintha, relative to her journey, the house-keeper, who had hitherto modestly forborne to make her appearance, was summoned to breakfast.

As soon as it was over, she sat down by Jacintha's desire, who was herself unequal to the task, to acquaint Mr. Decourcy with the melancholy event which had taken place.

In the course of the day, Jacintha put into her mother's hands the pocket-book which she had received from Mr. Decourcy, and which she could not avoid seeing, imparted to her much pleasure and consolation. Indeed, in every instance, it was evident, that her grief was of a yielding nature; and that, notwithstanding the virtues, the tenderness, the uniform indulgence of her departed husband, he would soon cease to be remembered with regret by her.

Jacintha was astonished at this want of feeling; she tried, however, as much as possible, to prevent her thoughts from dwelling upon it, lest it should utterly efface the sentiments she wished to entertain for her mother.

her, were impatient to join the funeral procession, which had already set out. Jacintha wept aloud. The day was now declining, and its falling glooms, together with the solemn stillness which reigned around, only interrupted by the dull reverberations of the bell, that sounded her father's summons to his last dreary home, heightened, if possible, her melancholy. At length the bell ceased to toll. Jacintha started from the bed on which she had been placed, and hastened to a window commanding a view of the church-yard. She saw the mournful procession entering the church, preceded by the clergyman. She dropped upon her knees. She moved not. She scarcely breathed. She seemed as if she feared to disturb the solemn service.

The church was lit up on this melancholy occasion, and by the wavering lights from its windows, she could discern the spot where her father was to be interred. She saw, with something like a sensation of pleasure, that he was to be laid beside the tomb which Egbert had erected over the remains of his mother and grandfather....a neighbour in death, as in life, to those whom he regarded! But the gleam of pleasure, if the sensation she felt at this moment could be styled so, faded away, on beholding the villagers thronging round the grave, as if to take a last farewell.

Her tears again burst forth. "Farewel!" she cried, "my father, farewell forever in this world! In the next, I trust, we shall meet again! Without such hope, how could we support the anguish which attends a separation from those we love.... how overcome the shivering horror which seizes us, at beholding their beloved remains consigned to darkness and decay?"

This letter, far from inspiring Mrs. Greville with pleasure and gratitude, as might have been supposed, from the contents, displeased and disappointed her. She had flattered herself that Mr. Decourcy would have invited her and Gertrude to spend at least the winter at his house ; and his not doing so, together with the ardent wishes he expressed for Jacintha's return, mortified and irritated her too highly, to permit her to feel his generosity. Indeed, on this head she did not deem him entitled to many thanks, as she tried to persuade herself that, in acting as he had done, he but merely fulfilled his duty.

She could not entirely conceal her dissatisfaction from Jacintha, neither the cause from which it sprung. She also hinted something like an intention of going to town, notwithstanding the cruel neglect of Mr. Decourcy, and her determination of keeping Jacintha with her till that period.

Final arrangements were made for the funeral upon the receipt of Mr. Decourcy's letter, and two days after it took place. All the family, Mrs. Greville excepted, prepared to attend, as did most of the villagers ; for Greville was universally beloved.

But when Jacintha saw the coffin removing, when she reflected, that in this world she should never more behold him to whom she was so strongly attached by the ties of affection and gratitude, the fortitude with which she had hitherto endeavoured to submit to the dispensations of Providence, utterly failed....she fainted, and was reconveyed to her chamber. On reviving, she was left to indulge the anguish of her heart alone ; for those who had assisted in recovering



to Hertfordshire, which she made Mrs. Decourty's illness an excuse for doing, Mrs. Greville positively declared she would not let her leave Wyefield till she left it herself, which could not be at least for a month.

"You are really then going to London, madam," said Jacintha.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mrs. Greville. "I suppose there is nothing wonderful in my doing so. Perhaps you think I have no friends there; but if you do, you are very much mistaken. I have many of my own relations there, of whom I have no reason to be ashamed, though, to be sure, I can't boast of having a nabob amongst them."

"If you could," said Jacintha, "it would be a very insignificant boast. It is of the virtues, not the opulence, of our friends, we should be proud."

"Oh dear! you always affected to be sentimental," cried Mrs. Greville, with a sarcastic smile, "no doubt for the purpose of obtaining admiration; but if every one thought as I do, you would be disappointed in your aim, for I detest affectation."

"So I perceive, madam," said Jacintha; "for I am firmly convinced you both act and speak from your *real* feelings."

"I don't know, ma'am," cried Mrs. Greville, her colour rising as she spoke, "whether you mean, by this speech, to compliment me; nor do I care, though I am rather inclined to think the contrary, for I see you are horridly vexed at my not letting you leave this place immediately. But I think you may reconcile yourself to a longer stay in Wyefield, when you reflect on not having had any share in the late fatigue and trouble which all the rest of the family underwent."

“Fatigue and trouble,” repeated Jacintha involuntarily, and with indignation. “Good heaven! what an expression. Do you call it a fatigue and trouble to attend the dying bed of a husband and a father?”

“I beg, miss, you may not misconstrue my expressions,” said Mrs. Greville, her colour still increasing. “I hope I know my duty, and have ever performed it as well as other people.”

“Would to God I had been here,” said Jacintha, without attending to these last words, “to have shared your fatigue and trouble! Would to God I had been here to have heard my father repeat the blessing which he so fervently, so sweetly bestowed upon me, in our parting moments...a blessing, which it will be my boast, my pride, to think I merited.”

“Indeed, he well deserved all the attention you could have paid him,” cried Mrs. Greville. “Of the extent of your obligations to him, you are not yet aware, nor consequently of the gratitude you owe him.”

“If you think I have not a perfect sense of these obligations,” replied Jacintha, “I shall be grateful to you, madam, if you will enlighten me on the subject.”

“Depend upon it I mean to do so,” said Mrs. Greville, with a malicious smile. To such smiles, however, Jacintha was too much accustomed, to attach any particular meaning to this; but to our readers it may possibly give an idea of Mrs. Greville’s real intention.

She had finally determined to conceal no longer the secret relative to Jacintha. In vain the mild form of her husband seemed rising to her view, to reproach her for a determination so contrary

to his wishes... his express desire. She persisted in her resolution of making a discovery, which she trusted, would lessen Jacintha in the general estimation of the world; and above all diminish, if not utterly deprive her of the regard of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy. That they would persevere in preferring her to Gertrude, after such a discovery, she could not suppose; but if they did, she was pretty confident she should, in some degree, be revenged upon them for doing so, by the censure which such flagrant injustice must draw upon them from the world.

To her extreme regret, her husband, as he had often told her would in all probability be the case, had gone to his grave, without imparting to her any of the particulars she was so anxious to know respecting Jacintha. When convinced he could not recover, she artfully mentioned the name of Jacintha several times to him, in hopes it might lead to some inadvertent expression that would betray the long-concealed secret; but Greville, clear and collected to the last moment, never dropped a hint that could in the least degree gratify her curiosity: on the contrary, he earnestly conjured her never to undeceive Jacintha or the world, with regard to her not being allied to them. He also spoke in the warmest manner of the virtues of his adopted daughter, and implored Mrs. Greville, if ever she needed it, to extend to her a mother's care, and make her house her asylum.

As soon as she had recovered from the transient shock his death occasioned her, she imparted to Gertrude the secret so long and painfully pent up in her bosom concerning Jacintha; omitting, however, to mention the real motives which had induced her to bestow the name of daughter

upon her. To this measure, she asserted, she was alone influenced by humanity, which the conduct of Jacintha had long since made her repent.

Not satisfied with this falsehood, or rather wishing to conceal (from the desire we all have to appear amiable) the malevolence and selfishness which prompted the present discovery, Mrs. Greville proceeded to tell the astonished Gertrude, that, touched by a similar repentance, her father had, almost in his last moments, desired that Jacintha might no longer be acknowledged one of his family.

"And, but for the agonies with which he was seized about this time," cried she, "I am confident he would have disclosed to me every thing concerning her birth. However, to know she does not belong to us, will be quite sufficient to prevent our friends from any longer lavishing that kindness and attention upon her, which they have so long done, to our detriment."

"Yes, I think she has too long, indeed, usurped our rights," exclaimed Gertrude, when amazement would permit her to utter a connected sentence. "I wonder, mamma, you could suffer her to take my place in Mrs. Decourcy's house. No doubt, had she known who she really was, she never would have invited her in preference to me; and one or other of us, I'm sure, she meant to take."

"Well, well, my dear," said Mrs. Greville, "you must only reconcile yourself to what is past, by reflecting on what is to come. I'm sure you'll soon have an opportunity of triumphing over her completely."

The hope and prospect of doing so, tended much more to appease the anger and resentment Ger-

trude felt, at what she conceived the usurpation of Jacintha, than all the eloquence of her mother.

Impatient to gratify her malice, by humbling the lofty spirit of Jacintha, which had hitherto soared above it, and which she doubted not of the present discovery effectually doing, she could scarcely be prevented from hastening to communicate it to her; nor would any thing have prevailed on her not to do so, but her mother's representing to her, that if Jacintha was apprized of it before Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, she would, in all probability, take such underhand measures to ingratiate herself into their favour, or secure that portion of it which she already enjoyed, as might render any attempts hereafter to deprive her of it, ineffectual.

Anxious to develope the mystery which veiled the birth of Jacintha, they carefully examined the papers of Greville, from which they hoped to have received some information respecting it; but their hopes were disappointed.

The day after the funeral, Mr. Decourcy's house-keeper departed from Wyefield; and it was soon evident to Jacintha, that it was not from any wish for her company, that her mother prevented her from leaving it at the same time, as she even studiously avoided conversing with her....an example which was followed by Gertrude. The almost total solitude to which she was consequently consigned, together with the marked unkindness with which she was treated upon every occasion, was not by any means calculated to diminish the melancholy with which the death of her supposed father had impressed Jacintha's mind. Every day increased it, for every day gave her new cause to deplore his loss; and, but for the sweet hope she entertained of Egbert's return, and the prospect

she beheld of being soon restored to Mrs. Decourcy, her spirits would have utterly failed her. Her only pleasure was derived from wandering through the scenes which had been the favourite haunts of Greville. Amidst these scenes, with a "sadly pleased remembrance," she dwelt upon the many proofs she had received of his tenderness....his affection.

Here, in the gloom of evening, she could often, almost have fancied she heard his mild voice mingling in the mournful breeze, and saw his pale form gliding amidst the distant solitudes, in mournful contemplation.

The period at length arrived for her removal from a place, where it was impossible for her to enjoy any thing like happiness, till time had blunted the poignancy of her feelings.

Previous to quitting Wyefield, Mrs. Greville placed her sons at a school near it; and from this, and other arrangements, Jacintha was pretty certain it was not her design to make a short stay in London. Of her intention of going thither, Mr. Decourcy was apprized. She assured him it was a measure dictated more by necessity than inclination, change of scene being absolutely requisite for the restoration of her health and spirits.

Without making any observations upon what she had said, Mr. Decourcy, in reply to her letter, merely invited her to rest herself at his house in her way to London, and promised to send his carriage to meet her at St. Albans.

Though Jacintha so ardently wished to leave Wyefield, she could not bid it what, in spite of her reason, she believed would be a long farewell (from a gloomy sadness, a kind of prophetic feeling which had taken possession of her mind), without a sigh of regret.....so strong was her attachment for what

she considered the place of her nativity....an attachment which can never be obliterated from hearts of sensibility.

With feelings totally dissimilar from those of Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, she commenced her journey ; there was, indeed, nothing of melancholy or mourning about *them*, but their habits.

The second day they reached St. Albans, and found Mr. Decourcy's carriage waiting their arrival. As soon as Mrs. Greville and Gertrude had adjusted their dress (at all times a matter of importance to them) they stepped into it, and proceeded to his house. He received them in the hall with kindness and sensibility, and conducted them to Mrs. Decourcy, who, though able to leave her chamber, was still in a very languid state : her recovery having been greatly retarded by the shock she received from her brother's death. She was deeply affected at beholding Mrs. Greville and the girls. Grief, however, did not prevent her from welcoming them to her house ; but, though she displayed much tenderness in her manner to Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, it required no great discernment to perceive, that her heart was not so much interested about them as Jacintha.

As soon as the painful emotions, occasioned by this meeting, had subsided, Jacintha felt a sensation of happiness she had for some time been a stranger to, at finding herself again in a house where she was certain of meeting kindness, sympathy, and affection ; but the tranquillity this idea was calculated to diffuse over her mind, was soon interrupted.

---

CHAP. IX.

---

"Not the last sounding could surprise me more,  
"That summons drowsy mortals to their doom."

DRYDEN.

---

GERTRUDE having been previously instructed by her mother, contrived a pretext for drawing Jacintha from the parlour soon after dinner. The moment they retired, Mrs. Greville hastened to make the discovery which, she trusted, would sink Jacintha in the estimation of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy. She began by repeating her acknowledgments to them for their kindness and attention on the late melancholy occasion, and proceeded to say, she had been impatient for the present interview, in order to disclose to them a secret which Mr. Greville, upon his death-bed, commanded her to reveal.

At these words Mrs. Decourcy, who had hitherto sat with her head resting pensively upon her arm, started, and fastened her eyes with the most anxious expression upon Mrs. Greville. Abashed by her looks, which Mrs. Greville thought expressive of something like a doubt of her veracity, she involuntarily paused. Her confusion, however, was but transitory, and she briefly and unhesitatingly informed them of all she desired them to know, or indeed had to disclose, concerning Jacintha.



Surprise seemed to seal the lips of Mr. Decourcy for some minutes. Mrs. Decourcy appeared infinitely more shocked than surprised, nor did she attempt to break the silence which prevailed when Mrs. Greville ceased speaking.

" 'Tis a strange affair," at length cried Mr. Decourcy, raising his eyes from the table on which they had hitherto been bent, as if in profound meditation. " Did Mr. Greville never disclose to you whose child she was?"

" Never," replied Mrs. Greville, " though I frequently importuned him to do so."

" And what motive could actuate you to receive a child, of whose connections you were ignorant," cried Mr. Decourcy, " and pass her for your own?"

" Good nature, and a wish to oblige Mr. Greville," replied she.

" Oh, heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Decourcy, at these words.

The suddenness of this exclamation startled Mrs. Greville, and, for a few minutes, silenced Mr. Decourcy.

" Did you never," he then interrogated with renewed earnestness, " even conjecture who her parents were?"

" Never," said Mrs. Greville. " It was utterly impossible for me to do so. I own I should have been tempted to imagine she was, in some way or other, connected to Mr. Greville, from the extreme fondness he always manifested for her, but that he assured me to the contrary."

" Has Jacintha been told that she is not your child?"

" No, I thought it better to inform you and Mrs. Decourcy."

"Why should she be told?" asked Mrs. Decourcy.

Mrs. Greville hesitated for a moment, at a loss to form any excuse for making a communication, which it was natural to suppose, must be so painful; then suddenly recollecting herself....

"Your brother commanded me to tell her; and I cannot bring myself to disobey any of his commands."

"Undoubtedly not," said Mr. Decourcy.

He then, with the utmost earnestness of voice and manner, inquired particularly the age of Jacintha when received by Mrs. Greville; and how, where, and at what period, she had been brought to her.

Mrs. Greville fully answered all these inquiries, and he again expressed his surprise at Mr. Greville's never having entrusted her with the secret of Jacintha's birth; then resting his head upon his hand, he continued for some minutes in deep and gloomy meditation. At length raising his eyes, and looking earnestly at Mrs. Decourcy....

"Did your brother," said he, "never give you a hint on the subject? You have frequently told me he was very unreserved in his communications to you."

"Is it natural to suppose," replied Mrs. Decourcy, "that the confidence he denied to his wife, he would repose in me?"

"And to this hour you believed Jacintha to be his daughter?"

"Till this hour, I knew not that he meant to deny her," said Mrs. Decourcy.

The dark brows of Mr. Decourcy, at these words, became contracted, his cheeks flushed, his eyes lightened with indignation, and starting from

his chair, he traversed the room with a disordered step. Not more surprised than confounded by his manner, Mrs. Greville sat wildly staring at him, till her attention was attracted by Mrs. Decourcy; who, on attempting to leave her chair, sunk back, almost fainting.

"Bless me, what can be the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Greville, as she tried to raise the languid head of her sister-in-law. "Do pray, dear sir," addressing herself to Mr. Decourcy, "call for assistance?"

Mr. Decourcy flew to the bell, and having rung it with a violence sufficient to alarm the whole house, darted from the room.

Among those who obeyed his hasty summons to the parlour, were Gertrude and Jacintha.... Trembling and alarmed, they assisted in recovering Mrs. Decourcy; who, the moment she was able to move, quitted the room, leaning upon the arm of Jacintha, to the extreme mortification of Mrs. Greville, who had offered her services, but which were rejected with the most repulsive coldness.

On reaching her chamber, Mrs. Decourcy threw herself into a chair without speaking, and appeared violently agitated.

"Dear madam," said Jacintha, "something, I fear, has happened to disturb you."

"That invidious woman!" exclaimed Mrs. Decourcy, and paused.

Inexpressibly shocked by these words, which she could not doubt alluded to her mother, Jacintha was unable to repeat her inquiry concerning the cause of Mrs. Decourcy's agitation. She was also equally unable to repress her tears, at the idea of her mother having given uneasiness to their kind, their mutual benefactress.

"That invidious woman!" again repeated Mrs. Decourcy. "She you called your mother....she has disclaimed you....disowned you....renounced you forever!"

"Good God!" exclaimed Jacintha, with uplifted hands and eyes. "What have I done to merit such conduct? What has she alleged against me to justify it?"

"Nothing. Nor has she uttered an untruth, in saying you were not her child."

"Not her child!" repeated Jacintha, starting and gazing upon Mrs. Decourcy, as if she imagined her senses were forsaking her.

"Be composed, my dear girl," said Mrs. Decourcy, who appeared struggling with her own feelings, in order to try and calm the emotions of Jacintha. She then briefly acquainted her with all that Mrs. Greville had communicated.... "which, I am convinced," continued she, "from many circumstances, she never was desired to disclose by my brother. The motives which have actuated her to divulge what has been so long, so carefully concealed, are evident to me; but her hopes, her intentions, shall be frustrated to the utmost of my power."

Though Jacintha had no reason to be attached to Mrs. Greville, nor those of her family who now existed, she could not hear that she was cast off, unacknowledged, unowned, unclaimed by any relative, without feeling the severest anguish. Her pride, her sensibility, were alike wounded; and overcome by the violent and various emotions of her soul, she dropped in trembling agitation at the feet of her benefactress.

Mrs. Decourcy raised and embraced her. She said every thing she thought could compose her

feelings. She assured her, that the late discovery, instead of lessening, rather increased her affection for her.

"It was not because I thought you my relation," cried she, "that I esteemed and loved you; it was because I thought you amiable and engaging. While, therefore, you retain the qualities which first acquired my esteem, my regard must remain undiminished."

"Oh! madam," said Jacintha, bathing her hand with tears, "I am fully sensible of your goodness; but I cannot immediately get the better of the shock which your information has given me. You, I am sure, can picture to yourself what my feelings must be, at the idea of not knowing a being in this vast universe, whose protection or assistance I have a right to claim."

"Your own merit must ever give you a claim to the friendship of the worthy," said Mrs. Decourcy.

"Ah! madam," replied Jacintha, "that is a claim, I fear, which very few would allow; and even were it admitted, to incur continual obligations, can never be pleasing to a heart of real sensibility."

"My dear Jacintha," cried Mrs. Decourcy, "life is chequered. Our pleasures are seldom without alloy, or our pains without mitigation. In finding your happiness imperfect, you but share the common lot of humanity; let that reflection, therefore, reconcile you to your situation, and prevent you from foregoing the power of enjoying the present good, because it does not come to you exactly in the manner you could wish."

"It shall be my study to profit by your advice," replied Jacintha; "but you yourself, my dear madam," she continued, as if anxious to find an excuse for the painful feelings she could not conquer, "seemed shocked and distressed by the discovery Mrs. Greville has made."

"I wished to have prevented it," said Mrs. Decourcy.

"Were you then aware that she intended to make it?" asked Jacintha, with eager quickness. "Did you then really know that I was not the child of your brother?"

"I have not said that I did," cried Mrs. Decourcy, with uncommon gravity.

"No; but you implied it, I thought, madam."

"I did not mean to do so, then," said Mrs. Decourcy.

"Is there no clue, no means by which I could trace my parents?" asked Jacintha.

"None," said Mrs. Decourcy. "All inquiries relative to them, must forever be unavailing!"

"Forever!" repeated Jacintha mournfully. "Forever must I remain in ignorance of the authors of my existence? Perhaps at this very moment they live....they think of their deserted daughter!"

"If they do, believe me, it is not with any wish to acknowledge her," replied Mrs. Decourcy; "that their long relinquishment of her must convince you."

Jacintha clasped her hands together, and, by her looks, expressed the deepest sorrow.

"Once more," said Mrs. Decourcy, "I advise you not to let unavailing regrets poison your present enjoyments."

"I will endeavour to conquer them, my dear madam."

Mrs. Decourcy's woman now appeared to inform her lady that Mr. Decourcy wished to speak to her. She immediately rose to attend him, in her dressing-room, where she understood he was; affectionately pressing Jacintha's hand at the same moment, and bidding her remember what she had said to her.

Jacintha retired to her own chamber, to try to collect and compose her spirits ere she rejoined Mrs. Greville; whom she was desirous of seeing, for the purpose of interrogating her more minutely than she had interrogated Mrs. Decourcy, concerning the late discovery; indulging a faint hope that, by inquiring particularly into the affair, she should be able to obtain some information respecting her parents.

As soon as her agitation had a little subsided, she descended to the parlour, where she found Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, seated by themselves, engaged in an apparently interesting conversation, which her presence interrupted.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Greville, turning round as Jacintha approached, and looking earnestly in her face, where the traces of tears were still visible, "Mrs. Decourcy has saved me the painful necessity of informing you there is no connection between us; though, indeed, I don't know why I should call it painful, since I am sure the discovery will occasion you no regret."

Jacintha attempted to reply, but her voice was unequal to the effort, and she hastily averted her head, to conceal the tears which gushed from her eyes. She soon, however, conquered this emotion, and then, with as much calmness as

she could assume, informed Mrs. Greville she had been told of the particulars she had revealed to Mrs. Decourcy, and which she entreated her now to repeat, frankly acknowledging the motives which made her wish to hear them recapitulated.

"I cannot be more circumstantial to you, than I have already been to your friends," replied Mrs. Greville. "I know nothing of your parents; and," added she, with a malicious look, "there is every reason to believe it could not add to your happiness to know any thing of them."

"I understand your meaning, madam," said Jacintha, colouring; "but I cannot, I will not believe, that my parents were unamiable. Mr. Greville's being their friend, is a convincing proof to me that they were not."

"Pray how do you know Mr. Greville was their friend?" demanded Mrs. Greville.

"By accepting the guardianship of their unfortunate child," replied Jacintha. "What but friendship could have induced him to take her to his bosom, and educate her as his own?"

"Why, indeed, it is very natural to suppose nothing else could have induced him to do so," said Mrs. Greville; "but his having had a regard for your parents, is no proof of their worth; for, poor dear man! he was so good, so innocent himself, that it was an easy matter for any one to impose upon him by false appearances."

"That I firmly believe," said Jacintha; "and I also believe that much of his felicity proceeded from his not detecting the imposition practised on him. Simplicity and credulity are in some cases essential to happiness."



Jacintha involuntarily fastened her eyes upon Mrs. Greville, as she uttered these last words, whose rising colour clearly proved she understood their meaning.

At this instant a servant entered with an apology for Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy's not appearing again that night, as the former had letters on business to write, and the latter was extremely indisposed.

Jacintha flew to Mrs. Decourcy's chamber on receiving this intelligence, but was stopped at the entrance by her woman, who said her lady had retired to rest, and wished not to be disturbed. She had the satisfaction, however, of learning that her indisposition was not of a nature to cause any alarm.

She could not bear, in the present disturbed state of her mind, to return to the parlour; she accordingly repaired to her chamber, where, with increasing wonder, she revolved all that had passed throughout the day. She tried to reconcile herself to the unexpected discovery that had taken place, by reflecting, that it had neither deprived her of the friendship, nor would lessen her in the estimation of those she regarded. But though she endeavoured to banish the regrets it occasioned, she could not divest herself of a strong anxiety to learn something concerning her parents. A conviction, however, that this was an anxiety which could never be gratified, determined her at length to try and subdue it. But though she did not imagine Mrs. Decourcy could have satisfied her curiosity on this head, she could not avoid thinking, from some inadvertent expressions which had dropped from her, that she knew, previous to Mrs. Greville's disclosure, that she was not the child of her brother.

Why Mr. Greville should desire this long-concealed secret to be revealed, when no purpose could be answered by its disclosure, was a circumstance which astonished Jacintha, and made her at length suspect that he had never expressed such a desire. This suspicion, Mrs. Decourcy's recollected words confirmed; and Mrs. Greville's motives for divulging it were perfectly comprehended. The indignation with which this new instance of her cruelty and falsehood inspired Jacintha, made her almost rejoice that Mrs. Greville had no further claims upon her duty and affection.

On entering the breakfast-parlour, the next morning, Jacintha found only Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy there. The latter still looked pale and languid, and by the countenance of the former, it was evident that his mind was greatly disturbed. After the usual compliments were over, a silence of some minutes ensued. Mr. Decourcy then, though with visible reluctance, took the hand of Jacintha, and desired her not to let the late discovery affect her spirits, as it could make no alteration in the sentiments her friends entertained for her.

His words were kind, but his manner was the reverse; and Jacintha could not help thinking, a thought which wounded her to the very heart, that, on the present occasion, his language and feelings were totally dissimilar.

She endeavoured, however, to dissipate the involuntary gloom which this idea threw over her, by trying to persuade herself it was erroneous; that it was not from any diminution of his regard, but something which had happened to discom-

pose his mind, that his air was so cold when he addressed her.

On the entrance of Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, a general, though evidently forced conversation took place, every one present appearing much more inclined to indulge their own thoughts than enter into discourse.

Jacintha could not avoid noticing the cold and ceremonious manner in which Mrs. Decourcy behaved to Mrs. Greville and Gertrude, whose looks proved they had not been less quick in perceiving it.

Mrs. Greville, indeed, to her extreme regret and mortification, perceived it was not Jacintha, but herself, she had lessened by the late discovery ; a convincing proof that doubts were entertained of her being desired to make it by Mr. Greville. So humbled did she feel at the idea of having her veracity doubted, that but for the pain it was evident the disclosure had given Jacintha, she would have regretted it.

Unable to bear the supercilious conduct of Mrs. Decourcy, which her heart told her she but too well merited, she resolved on departing for London the next day. This intention, which met with no opposition either from Mr. or Mrs. Decourcy, she announced at dinner ; and accordingly, the ensuing morning, departed for the metropolis, to the great joy of Gertrude, who was impatient for its pleasures, and who, besides, detested a residence under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, from the involuntary restraint she felt in their presence.

Mrs. Greville affected to take a tender leave of Jacintha, and said, though she had no longer the honour of being considered as her mother,

she should still retain for her the same regard she had always felt.

"I am convinced you will, madam," replied Jacintha, with a sarcastic smile she could not suppress, "nor will my gratitude for it be diminished, though I should receive fewer proofs than you have hitherto given me of it."

---

CHAP. X.

---

" I fancy  
" I'm now turn'd wild, a commoner of nature,  
" Of all forsaken."

DRYDEN.

---

WHILST Mrs. Greville and Gertrude were enjoying the pleasures for which they had so long panted, the happiness of Jacintha was gradually declining, like the tender blossoms of a too early spring before a nipping wind ; and her short-lived felicity but rendered more acute her present sorrow ; as transient gleams of sunshine, on a wintry day, but render more oppressive the glooms by which they are succeeded. The diminution of a happiness, which she had so sensibly felt, and gratefully acknowledged, was occasioned by the striking alteration which took place in the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy towards her, soon after the departure of Mrs. Greville.

From the most conciliating tenderness, the kindest attentions, and expressions of regard, they suddenly became cool and neglectful. Mr. Decourcy no longer sought opportunities of conversing with her, as he had formerly done, on subjects which were calculated to expand her ideas, and improve her judgment ; but observed, upon every occasion, to her, an almost total silence.

Nor did Mrs. Decourcy appear to feel more pleasure in her society than he did.

This cruel, this unexpected change, Jacintha imputed to the late discovery. She knew no other cause to which she could ascribe it; for her memory could furnish her with no instance of ever having acted in any manner that could excite their displeasure. She concluded she was indebted to her supposed relationship to them, for their past kindness; and, that since they could no longer consider her as a connection, they sincerely regretted having taken her under their protection; though they could not think of withdrawing it after their solemn promises of continuing it to her...promises which, she now had reason to suppose, were made from the impulse of the moment, without consideration or reflection. Oh! how did she lament not having the power of releasing them from these, as she imagined, repented promises; but she knew no roof, except their's, which would afford her a shelter.

She now began to experience a misery, which can only be exceeded by that attendant on a guilty conscience...the misery of dependance; and wept with bitterness over the disastrous fate which obliged her to receive favours from those, whose regard for her seemed so totally extinguished.... favours which, except bestowed by the hand of affection, must ever be oppressive to a noble and a feeling heart.

Humbled and afflicted; wounded to the very soul to think it was only imaginary ties which had interested Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy about her, her nights were often passed in tears, her days in restless inquietude. She could no longer attend to her usual avocations, but strove to beguile the

wretchedness of her thoughts in rambling about, whenever the weather would permit her to leave the house.

There was a mournful sympathy between her and nature in the present season, which was soothing to her feelings.

"But the sympathy will not long continue," she exclaimed. "Ah! will my hopes, like the verdure of these groves, revive? Will my heart, like them, again become the resort of harmony and joy?"

She loved to walk beneath the trees, amidst the leafless boughs of which,

"Barren as lances, the wind

"Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes ;"

where no other noise was heard, save the faint warble of the red-breast, content

"With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd,

"Pleas'd with his solitudes, and flitting light,

"From spray to spray, shaking where'er he rests,

"From many a twig the pendant drops of ice,

"That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.

"Stillness, accompany'd by sounds so soft,"

charmed Jacintha even more than total silence could have done, and often lulled her anguish.

But though the calm scenes of nature could sooth, it was only the idea of Egbert's love....the hope, the expectation of his quick return, which could console her. That the alteration in her situation, would occasion any alteration in his sentiments, she never for a moment fancied; on the contrary, she was convinced that sorrow would doubly endear her to him, and that, with eager transport, he would snatch her from misery and dependance. These thoughts sometimes almost restored her to perfect tranquillity; but too often,

the pressure of present ill, repelled the pleasure which prospects of future happiness were calculated to inspire.

Severely as her pride was wounded by the altered conduct of her protectors, her sensibility was still more severely injured. She esteemed, she loved them, particularly Mrs. Decourcy, with the utmost fervency; and, in the most exalted, the most independent situation that fortune could have placed her, the diminution of that lady's regard would have cast a cloud over her happiness.

But her painful feelings were not entirely excited on her own account. The change which took place in the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy to her, was not more striking than that which took place in their conduct to each other. Their mutual tenderness, their domestic harmony, were gone. Pensive and unsocial, they sat in each other's company, and Jacintha felt scarcely more grief at their altered manners to her, than to one another. The cause of this change it was utterly impossible for her even to conjecture, and the surprise was not inferior to the regret it excited.

Three weeks passed away, unmarked by any occurrence, and without decreasing the coldness and reserve of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy. A gloomy melancholy seemed to have taken possession of their minds. They admitted no company, and forbore entirely to speak of returning to London, though apprized of their house being ready for their reception.

The dejection of Jacintha daily increased. The natural cheerfulness of her mind, which had so often given her strength to bear up against sorrow and oppression, was completely subdued by the idea of her forlorn situation. Her warm, her



glowing, her affectionate heart, was chilled, was agonized, at the idea of her being so totally disregarded as she now believed herself to be. The existence, which appeared so little esteemed in the eyes of others, would soon have lost all value in her own, but for the assurance she retained of Egbert's love; the hope of his soon returning, and again connecting her to society. At present, she seemed to herself a blank, a cipher in the great account...a solitary being, who, like the lonely flower of the rock, might fade away, unmissed and unlamented.

---

---

CHAP. XI.

---

---

" Dissembled quiet, sits upon my face,  
" My sorrows to my eyes no passage find,  
" But sink within."

---

---

IT was now about the season that, on the two preceding years, Jacintha had been so near in idea to, but so remote in reality from, happiness; and she often reflected, with mingled surprise and regret, on the many strange incidents and vicissitudes she had experienced in her short journey through life. Deeply meditating on them one day, she heeded not how far she had wandered, nor thought of returning home, till the glooms of evening began to gather round her, and reminded her that, in all probability, she should keep Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy waiting dinner. This idea had no sooner occurred, than she hastened forwards.

The path she took, wound between a thick shrubbery, where clumps of evergreens almost excluded the faint light that still lingered in the sky, and spread such an additional gloom around, that had not this been the shortest way to the house, Jacintha would have avoided it. She was still far from home, when she suddenly heard some one hastily following her. She felt somewhat startled,

and her alarm was not diminished, when, casting a timid glance behind, she perceived the person, who evidently pursued her, was a man, so muffled up, that even had the light been stronger than it now was, his features could not have been distinguished.

She moved on with redoubled quickness; but, notwithstanding the swiftness with which she walked, or rather ran, she was soon overtaken.

"I almost gave up all hopes of seeing you," exclaimed the stranger, catching her hand as he spoke.

His voice was not unfamiliar to Jacintha, though she could not recollect where she had heard it.

"Me!" cried she, in a tremulous accent, and endeavouring at the same moment to disengage her hand, "me did you expect to see?"

"You," he replied.

Jacintha now recognized the voice of lord Gwytherin.

"Oh heaven! miss Greville, this is indeed an unexpected happiness," said he, eagerly pressing her hand to his lips.

This action excited the indignation of Jacintha, and restored the faculties which surprise had suspended. She forced away her hand, and attempted to pass him.

"Stop," cried lord Gwytherin, still impeding her progress, "stop, I conjure you....if but for a minute."

"I insist, my lord," said Jacintha, trying to speak composedly, though her heart fluttered with terror, "I insist, my lord, upon your not detaining me!"

"I cannot, I will not let you pass," replied he, "till you have heard what I wish to say....till you have heard that...."

He paused, for at this instant approaching steps were heard, and in the next, the voice of Mr. Decourcy, discoursing with his game-keeper, with whom he was returning homewards after a day's sport. Jacintha had no further occasion now to repeat her commands to his lordship to let her pass. He turned from her with precipitation, and hastily disappeared; but he was not quick enough to elude the observation of Mr. Decourcy, who, advancing to Jacintha, desired to know who the person was that had fled with such quickness from her.

Jacintha was too much agitated and confused to attempt concealing the truth, had she even been inclined to do so; she accordingly replied, it was lord Gwytherin.

"Lord Gwytherin," repeated Mr. Decourcy in an accent expressive of surprize and displeasure; "you know him then?"

"Yes, he was at his seat at Wyefield, last summer."

"And did you never know him till that period?"

"Never, sir," replied Jacintha.

"Never felt interested about him till then?" resumed Mr. Decourcy.

"Till then!" repeated Jacintha, indignantly; "good heaven! sir, you err extremely, if you suppose I ever was interested about lord Gwytherin."

"Why should you meet him then?"

"The meeting was accidental...not more unexpected than undesired, I assure you."

"But do you not imagine he came hither to see you?" asked Mr. Decourcy, in an anxious voice.

"I cannot tell, sir, whether he did or not," answered Jacintha; who now began to suspect that

he was acquainted not only with the character of lord Gwytherin, but his conduct to her ; and meant, in consequence of this knowledge, to resent his having again obtruded into her presence ; not, she flattered herself, from any regard for her, for that, she believed, had long since ceased ; but from the pride of his nature, which could not brook the idea of having any person under his protection, injured or insulted ; injurious treatment to them being, she supposed, considered by him a kind of indirect indignity to himself. But to whatever motives she ascribed the resentment she imagined he now felt, the apprehensions it excited in her bosom were still the same. She trembled to think of the consequences which might result from his giving way to it, well acquainted as she was with the haughtiness of his spirit, and the vindictive violence of lord Gwytherin's disposition.

She endeavoured to speak of something else than the incident which she imagined had caused it, but in vain. Mr. Decourcy persisted in dwelling on her interview with lord Gwytherin, and questioning her concerning it. These questions teased and perplexed Jacintha, and she rejoiced to enter the house, as she hoped she should there be able to avoid them ; of this, however, she became very doubtful, on his desiring her to follow him into the parlour. But contrary to her expectations, he did not appear inclined to renew his interrogations ; and his discontinuing them, dissipated, in a great measure, the apprehensions of Jacintha.

He ordered a servant to acquaint Mrs. Decourcy of his return ; the man came back in a few minutes, and said his mistress was not at home.

"Not at home!" repeated Mr. Decourcy starting in manifest agitation from a chair upon which he had thrown himself. "How...whither is she gone?"

"I cannot tell, sir," replied the man, "nor do any of the servants know; but she has not been long out, for 'tis not half an hour since her maid was with her in her dressing-room."

Mr. Decourcy bit his lips, knit his brows, and traversed the room in an agitation which Jacintha could no longer place to her own account; and which she was astonished so trivial a circumstance as that of finding Mrs. Decourcy out, when he expected to have found her at home, could inspire, and to this circumstance it was evidently owing.

That he should be surprised at hearing she was out at such an hour, unattended, Jacintha could not indeed wonder at; nor could she possibly account for her being so, except by supposing, that, like her fellow-mortals, she was now and then a little whimsical.

A quarter of an hour passed in profound silence; Jacintha wishing, but fearing to quit the room, lest she should displease Mr. Decourcy. At the expiration of this period, Mrs. Decourcy entered, but without appearing to have been out.

"You have just returned from your walk, I presume," said Mr. Decourcy, with coolness.

She answered (Jacintha thought) rather confusedly, and said something of having been tempted down the avenue by the clearness of the evening; then ringing the bell, as if to prevent any further inquiries, she asked whether dinner was ready, and being answered in the affirmative, directly led the way to the dining-parlour.

Soon after the cloth was removed, and the attendants withdrawn, a few words inadvertently dropped from Mr. Decourcy expressive of a wish to speak to Mrs. Decourcy alone. In consequence of these words, though without seeming to have noticed them, Jacintha immediately formed an excuse for quitting the parlour; from whence she hastened to her chamber, where she endeavoured to amuse herself by reading; but the disturbance of her mind prevented her from deriving any entertainment from books.

The unhappiness of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy occupied her thoughts; and, if she ceased to think of that unhappiness for a moment, it was but to think of lord Gwytherin, who, she could not avoid believing, after the late adventure, still persisted in his designs against her. Neither could she avoid thinking, from the place in which she had met him, and which was her most favourite haunt, that he knew some person in the house, who acquainted him with her movements. This idea alarmed her, as she knew it was difficult to guard against the designs of a secret enemy; and none but an enemy could, in any manner, attempt to betray her into the power of lord Gwytherin. But the Being on whom she depended for protection, was equal, she knew (and the idea calmed her mind), to defeat all the machinations that could be formed against her, and conduct her with safety and honour through the mazy path of life.

From herself her thoughts again reverted to Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy....unhappy and dejected in the midst of blessings.

“Ah!” cried she, “how little can the world judge from appearances! If it could look into their hearts, I fear it would find there was more

cause to pity, than to envy them. What can this untold sorrow be, which has power to poison all their enjoyments? But for me to attempt to conjecture it, would only be to bewilder and distract myself. The thorn which rankles in their breasts is carefully hidden; and why should I wish to discover, except I thought I could extract it.

"That I could in any degree, occasion their present unhappiness, is surely impossible," said she, endeavouring to dispel an idea, which at this instant obtruded itself upon her mind, of having, in some way or other, been the cause of it...an idea calculated to annihilate her little remaining peace, and inflict the deepest distress upon her.

"If I really thought so," cried she, wildly starting from her chair, and traversing the room with a disordered step, "no consideration should detain me longer in their house. But no, 'tis impossible this can be the case."

She resumed her seat, and again tried by reading, to divert her thoughts; but her efforts to do so were vain: there was a weight, a sadness on her heart, which could only be relieved by tears. The loneliness of her chamber, which was remote from the inhabited part of the house, and the mournful howling of the blast without, added not a little to her melancholy, by making her feel as if she was utterly deserted. She involuntarily contrasted the solitary evenings she now passed, with the social, the pleasant ones she had been accustomed to spend at Wyefield.

"Oh, blissful evenings!" exclaimed Jacintha, "more prized in the remembrance, than even in the enjoyment; for, alas! we seldom know the full extent of our felicity till it has departed. Will such domestic pleasures ever again be mine?....."



Shall I again enjoy the social happiness for which my heart is formed? Oh! my friend, my father (for so I will ever call thee), how prophetic were my feelings upon thy death! How truly did they inform me, that in losing thee, I had sustained a loss which would bring upon me various sorrows! Wert thou living, I should not be as I now am, a stranger upon the earth...a being about whom nobody seems interested!"

This idea brought with it an ardent wish to know whether her parents were in existence; a wish, however, which she endeavoured to dismiss, from the very little probability there appeared of ever having it gratified.

"If they are dead," said she, "and the dead are ever permitted to review the world, perhaps at this very moment they may behold my sorrows with regret...perhaps at this moment..."

Here a low noise startled her. She rose with trembling eagerness, but it had ceased; and concluding it was the moaning of the wind she had heard, she was resuming her seat, when again the noise returned. Ere she could reach the door, however, to which she now hastened, it was thrown open by a house-maid, who entered to make up the fire for the night. A momentary blush suffused the cheek of Jacintha, at the idea of her weakness, in suffering herself to be so easily alarmed; and she determined no longer to indulge the dejection to which she imputed it, convinced that, if she did, her mind would at length become totally enervated.

"Lord a mercy, miss, why don't you ring for something for the fire?" said the maid.

Jacintha now cast her eyes upon it, and, for the first time, perceived it was almost out; for she had been too much engrossed by her reflections, to attend to any thing else.

She learned with astonishment that it was past ten, and that Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy had already retired to their chambers.

"I dare say, miss," said the maid, "you were surprised at not being called down to tea; but, Lord, there has been neither tea nor supper in the parlour to-night. Master and mistress," continued she, lowering her voice, and looking back to see whether the door was closed, "have had a little misunderstanding, I believe; and so they have gone to their rooms without taking any thing."

Startled by this intelligence, Jacintha was eagerly opening her lips to inquire what reason she had for supposing so, when a sudden reflection on the impropriety she should be guilty of, in conversing with a domestic on so delicate a subject, prevented her, and made her change the inquiry she had been about making, into one of a very different nature; then taking up a book, she affected to be entirely engrossed by its contents, in order to prevent any further conversation. The girl perceiving this, ceased to speak, and soon withdrew; but not without offering to bring Jacintha some refreshment, which she declined.

Left again to uninterrupted meditation, she felt more distressed than she had done before, in consequence of what she had just heard; and, notwithstanding her recent determination to resist the influence of melancholy, she retired to rest with an oppressed heart.

She was relieved from many apprehensions concerning Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, by finding them together in the breakfast-parlour, the next morning; but the pleasure this circumstance inspired, was soon dispelled by perceiving a deeper shade of melancholy than ever upon their countenances: she also found them more reserved than usual.

The unsocial silence which prevailed was interrupted, however, ere breakfast was over, by the unexpected arrival of Woodville, who brought with him his usual cheerfulness and vivacity. His appearance revived the languid spirits of Jacintha. In him she beheld a person with whom she could not only converse on the subject most interesting to her heart, but a person who, she imagined, had some regard for her...an idea truly consolatory at this period.

Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy lost somewhat of their gloom on seeing him ; but it was evident to Jacintha, that the sudden cheerfulness which brightened their looks, was derived, not from any satisfaction they felt at his visit, but from a wish of concealing from him their unhappiness, lest he should attempt to discover the source from whence it originated.

Relative to their happiness, or her own, Jacintha resolved not to drop a hint ; honour and pride alike prevented her from communicating either. She deemed herself bound to conceal whatever she thought her protectors wished to conceal ; and she shrunk from the humiliating idea of having it known to any being, that she was indebted to humanity, not to affection, for an asylum.

She found an opportunity, soon after breakfast, of inquiring from Woodville, whether he was yet acquainted with the late discovery respecting her. He replied in the affirmative. He had met Mrs. Greville accidentally, in London, he said, and she had informed him of it.

" But," added he, " I could scarcely credit what she told me."

" 'Tis but too true, however," replied Jacintha, with a deep sigh, and starting tears ; " I belong to nobody !"

"You will not long be able to say so," cried Woodville, affectionately. "You will soon, I hope and believe, belong to one of the noblest, the worthiest of human beings."

The train of sweet ideas which these words introduced into the mind of Jacintha, diffused such a serenity over it, as enabled her, without any great difficulty, to conceal its sorrows, and converse, if not cheerfully, at least composedly, with Woodville.

About the decline of day, a secret impulse carried Mr. Decourcy to the spot where, on the preceding evening, he had met lord Gwytherin and Jacintha. Woodville perceived him, from the parlour window, crossing the lawn to the shrubbery; and not conceiving that he wished to be alone, he followed him thither. Mr. Decourcy could readily have dispensed with his company; he did not permit him, however, to perceive that he was disconcerted by it, and forced himself to enter into conversation about some improvements he purposed making in the grounds the ensuing spring.

They had not proceeded far through the shrubbery, when they perceived a man slowly walking before them, who, on hearing their steps, turned round with quickness, and after glancing a moment at them, darted into an obscure path and disappeared; but, notwithstanding his disguise, and the precipitation with which he fled, Mr. Decourcy recognized him to be lord Gwytherin, and starting back, he uttered his name with something like an execration.

"Lord Gwytherin!" repeated Woodville, with scarcely less emotion. "What, does he reside in this neighbourhood?"

"He has some secret residence in it," cried Mr. Decourcy, in an accent expressive of displeasure.

"You have seen him hereabouts, then, before?"

"Yes, yesterday, at this hour, and in this walk, with miss Greville."

"Good God, is it possible!" exclaimed Woodville. "Surely the meeting must have been accidental."

"So she said," replied Mr. Decourcy, moving towards the house as he spoke; "but they appeared in a deep and interesting conversation, which my approach interrupted; and from which circumstance, I am rather doubtful of the truth of her assertion."

Woodville felt agitated and alarmed by this intelligence. He began to fear that the insinuating manners of lord Gwytherin had not altogether failed of making an impression on the mind of Jacintha; else, surely, he thought, she never could, for a moment, have been prevailed on to hold any intercourse with a man, whose conduct to her had been so atrocious...a man, whom delicacy and propriety should have made her shun with contempt and abhorrence. He felt deeply interested in her conduct, not only from the regard which his knowledge of her, from her earliest years, had inspired; but because with it was connected the happiness, the honour, of the friend he most loved and valued. After a little deliberation, he resolved on speaking to her concerning it; to inform her of what he had heard, and admonish her of the dangers, difficulties and disgrace, which the slightest deviation from propriety could not fail of drawing upon her. The eternal stigma which would be affixed to her name, if, situated as she was respecting Egbert, she attempted to en-

courage the attentions of any other man, particularly of such a man as lord Gwytherin, whose designs relative to her, she knew to be of the most injurious nature.

He wished to have inquired into her actions from Mr. Decourcy ; but the reserve of his manner, or rather the unwillingness he betrayed to speak upon the subject, prevented Woodville from doing so, and inclined him to believe the apprehensions he entertained of Jacintha's being prepossessed in favour of lord Gwytherin, were not erroneous ; and also that that prepossession had led her into some indiscretion, which had incurred the displeasure of her protectors.

When once a suspicion is excited, the most trivial circumstance can strengthen or confirm it, like glowing embers, which the weakest breath can fan into a flame.

The coldness of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy's manner ; their too visible uneasiness, which not all their efforts could conquer or conceal, counteracted as these efforts were by internal wretchedness, were proofs to Woodville that Jacintha had displeased them ; and he felt impatient for an opportunity of warning her of the unpleasant consequences which might, and would, in all probability, result from forfeiting their esteem and affection.

But, eagerly as he sought for this opportunity, it did not occur till the ensuing morning, when perceiving Jacintha alone in the garden, within the limits of which she had determined in future to confine her rambles, he joined her, and after a little hesitation, and many assurances of being urged to speak in the manner he was about doing, by his sincere regard and strong anxiety for her happiness, he briefly explained himself.

Jacintha listened to him with profound attention, but by degrees the blush of indignation suffused her cheek, at the idea of his unjust suspicions. When she reflected, however, that appearances were against her, and that nothing but real friendship could have prompted him to speak, to counsel her, as he had done, resentment gave way to gratitude ; she warmly acknowledged her obligations to him for his anxiety about her, and hastened to exculpate herself in his eyes. To do this was not a difficult matter. Woodville could not doubt her solemn assurances of having met lord Gwytherin but by accident, and being detained by him against her inclination ; and perhaps, had Egbert doubted her truth and constancy, he could not have felt a purer joy at finding her able to vindicate both, than Woodville experienced.

---

CHAP. XII.

---

“Forgive me, if I cannot better answer,  
“Than by weeping.”

ROWE.

---

WOODVILLE and Jacintha separated soon after the explanation which had taken place between them; and the former went to amuse himself, by rambling about the grounds.

As he was returning through the shrubbery, which curiosity to know whether lord Gwytherin would again be there, induced him to do, he thought he heard a low murmur of voices from a path at a little distance, and which was thickly shaded by tall evergreens. With trembling eagerness he paused a moment to listen; then lightly stepping forward, he beheld two persons slowly advancing down the path, one of whom, he knew, at the first glance, to be the disguised lord Gwytherin, and the other greatly resembled Jacintha, in figure; but a thick veil which shaded her face, together with the dusky light that now prevailed, for he had prolonged his walk to a late hour, prevented him from distinguishing her features.

Determined not to lose such an opportunity of ascertaining whether the suspicions, which again began to pervade his mind, were well or



ill-founded, Woodville sprang forward without hesitation; but the moment he did so, lord Gwytherin and his companion, who had not till then observed him, separated, and taking opposite directions, were almost immediately out of sight.

Woodville could not hesitate a moment which to follow. His anxiety to know who the lady was, made him eagerly pursue her steps; but not all the expedition he used enabled him to overtake her, and he reached the house breathless and disappointed.

The first object he cast his eyes upon, on entering the hall, was Jacintha, muffled up exactly as the person was whom he had seen with lord Gwytherin. That she was that person, he now could scarcely doubt; and it would have been difficult to determine whether regret or indignation were most predominant in his mind at her supposed duplicity. Jacintha, who was ascending the stairs at his entrance, paused to speak to him; but, instead of replying to what she said, he cast a disdainful glance upon her, and passed into the parlour.

Confounded by this conduct, Jacintha stood for a few minutes transfixed to the spot. She could only account for it by supposing, that either his suspicions had not been entirely removed in the morning, or had since revived...an idea which wounded her as severely as their disclosure had done; and nothing but the horror she felt at lying under them, could have induced her to follow him into the parlour, in order to receive an explanation of it; or, at least, to inquire his motives for treating her in a manner so little expected.

Their long intimacy, the connection which existed between him and the family to whom she had imagined she belonged, and the friendship he had always professed for her, authorized her making this inquiry ; yet, when opening her lips for the purpose, pride and resentment opposed her utterance, and she burst into tears.

Woodville appeared extremely affected by her emotion.

" If I have distressed you....." said he.

" If," repeated Jacintha ; " Oh ! Mr. Woodville, can you indeed doubt having done so. Can you indeed believe I am so insensible as not to feel, acutely feel, contemptuous treatment from those, whose esteem I flattered myself I had possessed. Be assured, nothing could alleviate the anguish it gives me, but the consciousness of not having deserved it."

" I must, I do believe you," cried Woodville, " notwithstanding all I have heard and seen. And I must, I will believe, that when you hear what I have to say, you will forgive the pain I have caused you."

He then proceeded to relate the circumstances which had impelled him to act as he had done ....circumstances, which Jacintha was almost brought to acknowledge, were sufficiently strong to lead him into error. She assured him solemnly, that beyond the precincts of the garden she had not been that day, nor meant to go, except she could be assured that lord Gwytherin had quitted the neighbourhood.

That she was not the person who had attracted him to it, she sincerely rejoiced. Who it was, she could not possibly conjecture ; but that it was

no one belonging to Mr. Decourcy's family, she was almost certain.

The pardon which Woodville solicited with humility and contrition, she granted, and promised, if possible, to think no more of the uneasiness he had caused her.

---

---

CHAP. XIII.

---

---

" She thrice essay'd to speak ; her accents hung,  
" And falt'ring dy'd, unfinish'd on her tongue,  
" Or vanish'd into sighs ; with long delay  
" Her voice return'd, and found the wonted way."

DRYDEN.

---

THE next morning, at breakfast, Mrs. Decourcy proposed to Woodville to drive her out in the phaeton, as the day was remarkably fine, and asked Jacintha whether she chose to accompany them. Jacintha said she would with pleasure, had she not received a letter that very day from Mrs. Falkland (Mr. Frankland's eldest daughter, lately married), which she wished to answer immediately, as it contained some very severe reproaches for her long silence....reproaches which, she was anxious to convince her friend, she did not merit.

Her excuse was admitted ; and, as soon as they drove off, she repaired to her chamber for the purpose of writing a long and explanatory letter. When finished, as Mrs. Decourcy and Woodville were not returned from their ride, and the day still continued fine, though the bright sunshine had gone off, she quitted the house with an intention of walking into the gardens. They lay at a little distance from it, and the intermediate space

was thickly planted with trees and clumps of evergreens. From behind one of these clumps, ere Jacintha had advanced many paces, to her great surprise (for she had no idea of meeting him so near the house) lord Gwytherin rushed forward, and, ere she could make an effort to avoid him, seized her hand.

"Suffer me to detain you," cried he, "I conjure, I entreat you....if but for a minute."

"I will, my lord," said Jacintha, with a kind of calm disdain in her voice and countenance; "I will suffer you to detain me, that I may have an opportunity of telling you, if you continue to persecute me in this manner, I must be under the unpleasant necessity of requesting the interference of my friends."

"Your friends have used me cruelly," exclaimed he, in a passionate accent, "or you would not speak to me in this manner. Good God! why have they left it to me to make a discovery so painfully interesting? Why left it to me....to tell you, that....."

He paused, apparently overcome by the violence of his emotions.

Jacintha became agitated; resentment gave place to curiosity.

"What," asked she, in a tremulous accent, and turning as pale as death, "what is it my friends have left *you* to tell me?"

"What I wish I could flatter myself would give you pleasure."

"Be explicit, my lord;....you torture me by this suspense," cried she, with increasing agitation.

"They have left it to me to tell you," said he, in a solemn voice, and looking earnestly at her as he spoke, "that I....." He again paused, for Jacintha seemed ready to drop at his feet.

"Go on, my lord," cried Jacintha, in a faint voice. "You can scarcely pain me more by any discovery you have to make, than by the conjectures you have excited."

"They have left it to me then, to inform you," resumed he, "that I am your father!"

These words acted like an electric shock upon Jacintha. Her senses, which appeared gradually receding, were instantly revived. She shrieked.

"*You my father!*" exclaimed she wildly, "you my father! Oh God! it is impossible!"

"You doubt, because you wish to disbelieve," cried lord Gwytherin, resentfully; "but Mrs. Decourcy will confirm the truth of my assertion. She will....."

He ceased, for Jacintha at this moment sunk almost fainting against his shoulder, overpowered by the suddenness of this discovery, or rather by the horror she felt at finding herself the daughter of a man who had meditated her destruction.

Terrified by her situation, lord Gwytherin laid her gently upon the grass, and tried, by chafing her hands, to revive her. In a short time she came a little to herself; but the moment her half-opened eyes glanced upon him, they were again closed, with a shivering sensation of disgust and abhorrence, and she involuntarily withdrew her hand.

"I see," cried he, in a voice expressive of resentment and anguish, and starting from the ground on which he had knelt beside her, "I see, you detest me. Would to God, I had withstood the pleadings of my heart...you would not then have been distressed by the present discovery; nor should I have been agonized, by knowing I was an object of hatred to my child."

"If I have said or done any thing to displease you, my lord," said Jacintha, who now felt it a

duty to endeavour to conceal the sentiments with which he had inspired her, "impute my having done so not to design, but to the confusion into which surprise has thrown me."

"May I then flatter myself," cried lord Gwytherin, as he raised her from the ground, "that you really do not hate me; or rather," added he, hesitatingly, "may I hope that you will endeavour not to do so? That, when time has proved the sincerity of my affection for you, as well as repentance for the conduct which gave you pain, you will give me a place in your regard? Had I sooner known my relationship to you, I should sooner have endeavoured to render myself worthy of that regard, and should also have avoided many errors and indiscretions, which I can never cease to regret."

"Mention them no more, my lord, I conjure you," cried Jacintha, inexpressibly shocked, as she well knew to what he alluded. "For mercy's sake," she exclaimed, with a wildness of look which alarmed him, "never again recur to what is past! But tell me," she added, "to what strange cause is it owing, that you were kept so long in ignorance of my connexion to you?"

"To do so," said lord Gwytherin, "to relate the variety of circumstances which conspired to keep me in ignorance, not only of your affinity to me, but of your very existence, would require more time than either of us can command at present."

"Good God!....my very existence!" repeated Jacintha. "I am all amazement at what I hear, and shall know no peace till I am acquainted with the mysterious circumstances you have alluded to. My mother too...she....."

“Who she is,” said lord Gwytherin, “you shall.....”

He was interrupted by Jacintha.

“Who she is,” repeated she, and grasped his arm....“She lives then...I have a mother!”

“Who she is,” resumed lord Gwytherin, with a calmness which, had Jacintha been sufficiently composed to have observed it, would have surprised her, “you shall hear; as well as every particular of our unfortunate story, whenever you can give me an opportunity of conversing with you in private.”

“In private,” said Jacintha, “must it be now in private!”

“It must,” replied lord Gwytherin; “’tis dangerous for us to be seen together.”

Jacintha started, and cast an apprehensive glance around.

“I think,” cried she, “you spoke as if Mrs. Decourcy knew of our relationship.”

“I did,” replied he; “she is acquainted with it.”

“And she only?” asked Jacintha.

“Yes; and with her the knowledge of it must rest. Fame, honour, happiness....nay, life itself, depend on its being kept a profound secret.”

Jacintha lifted her hands in astonishment.

“Oh that you could now,” she cried, “gratify my ardent curiosity!”

“’Tis impossible,” said he; “but sure you could soon contrive to give me an opportunity of speaking to you.”

“I know not how I can do so,” replied Jacintha, “for I am watched...I am.....” She paused, for she could not bring herself to say she was suspected; “could you not, therefore, write?” she added.



"Impossible ;...a letter could never fully explain the circumstances you wish to learn. Besides, even if it could, I should be too much agitated in retracing those circumstances, to be able to write."

Jacintha considered for a moment.

"This evening, perhaps," said she, "I...."

"Hush !" cried lord Gwytherin, in a low voice ; "did you not hear a rustling amongst the trees ?"

Jacintha, without attempting to listen, motioned for him to leave her ; terrified almost to death, at the idea of his being seen with her by Woodville.

He instantly obeyed her motion, and had scarcely disappeared, when she beheld Woodville approaching.

She endeavoured to calm her perturbation, and walked towards him as fast as her trembling limbs could carry her.

"Have you been long out ?" asked Woodville, as he met her.

"Not very long," she replied, and tried to shun his eyes as she spoke, from a conviction that her countenance was a faithful index of her mind.

Woodville was too quick, however, in his observations not to perceive at once the disorder of her looks, and, in an accent of surprise, exclaimed.

"Good heaven ! what is the matter ? You look pale and frightened ! Has any thing happened to alarm you ?"

"No, nothing," said Jacintha, still more agitated, from finding he had noticed her agitation. She then endeavoured to change the discourse, by asking whether he had had a pleasant ride.

Woodville mused for some minutes before he answered her, and then, in a cold and careless manner, said....

"Yes, a very pleasant one."

Jacintha asked a few other trifling questions, which he continued to answer with the same air of indifference, and on entering the house they separated ; she being wounded to the soul by his behaviour, which evidently implied a revival of his unjust suspicions concerning her. That time, however, would prove their unjustness, and fully eradicate them, she could not doubt ; and from this idea, felt the pain they at present gave her much diminished.

---

CHAP. XIV.

---

" With how secure a brow and specious form  
" He gilds the secret villain ! Sure that face  
" Was meant for honesty ; but Heav'n mismatch'd it,  
" And furnish'd Treason out with Nature's pomp,  
" To make its work more easy.  
" See how he sets his countenance for deceit,  
" And promises a lie before he speaks !"

SAID OF DOLABELLA BY ANTHONY.

---

A FEAR of agitating Mrs. Decourcy, by too suddenly revealing her knowledge of a secret which it was evident she never wished to learn, checked the impulse which would otherwise have carried Jacintha immediately to her, for the purpose of doing so ; and she retired to her chamber, in order to try and compose her spirits ere she appeared at dinner : but to succeed in this attempt was at present impossible. What she had so recently heard, as well as what she still expected to hear, kept her mind in a state of agitation, which rendered all her efforts to regain composure unavailing. Nor could she divest herself of the horror which had seized her the moment she learned she was the daughter of lord Gwytherin ; and so far from increasing her happiness, she was convinced the late discovery would considerably lessen it, since it could not fail of being a lasting source of anguish to her, to know a parent, to whom her

heart could pay no homage, whom she could neither love nor esteem.

In vain she endeavoured to awaken tender sentiments in his favour, by representing to herself his affection for her; to which alone she could suppose his disclosing their relationship was owing. The remembrance of his former conduct could not be obliterated, and her soul recoiled from the idea of even calling him her father.

She rejoiced to think that they would seldom, if ever, be together, in consequence of the necessity there was for keeping their connection a profound secret....a necessity which too clearly proved the unhappy circumstances under which she was born.

With a flood of tears she resigned the pleasing idea she had heretofore cherished, of her parents being virtuous; yet she still hoped she should hear something that might palliate their conduct.

She regretted not having been more urgent with lord Gwytherin, to inform her who her mother was. A thousand strange conjectures began to float upon her brain; and, in consequence of them, she felt pleased she had not been abrupt in her communications to Mrs. Decourcy, and finally determined not to acquaint her with what she had heard, till she had again seen lord Gwytherin, and conversed with him.

Absorbed in thought, she forgot the lateness of the hour, till restored to recollection by the entrance of a maid servant, who informed her dinner was nearly ready. Jacintha started up at this intelligence, and hastening to the toilet, began to adjust her dress.

"I have brought you a letter, miss," said the maid, presenting her one as she spoke, "which

Nanny Wilson's little boy gave me a few minutes ago for you. He says it is from his mother, about some work she was to do for you."

"For me," repeated Jacintha, breaking open the letter, in astonishment, which was not diminished by perceiving the signature of lord Gwytherin. The contents were as follow :

"I am obliged to go to town to-morrow ; and, as I do not know when I may have another opportunity of conversing with you, I earnestly entreat you to let me see you this evening. Just before we parted, I think you said something of being able to do so. Let me know whether I was mistaken. Be under no apprehension of this letter leading to any discovery ; the person entrusted with the conveyance of it, does not know who it comes from. Adieu ! Believe me with the truest affection,

"Yours,

"GWYTHERIN."

Jacintha hesitated a moment, then sitting down to her writing-table, she wrote as follows :....

"MY LORD,

"Between the hours of eight and nine, this evening, come to the glass door, on the south side of the house, which opens from the lawn into the breakfast-parlour. I will receive you there, if it be possible for me to do so ; if not, I flatter myself you will contrive some method of acquainting me with the particulars I am so anxious to learn. With respect,

"I remain, my lord,

"Your obedient

J. G.

The moment she had sealed her note, which she did not direct, she dispatched the maid with it, and crushing lord Gwytherin's, was proceeding to throw it into the fire, when the sudden ringing of the dinner-bell, made her hastily put it into her pocket, and descend, without altering her dress, to the drawing-room, where, besides the usual family party, she found three gentlemen and two ladies, who resided in the neighbourhood, whom Mrs. Decourcy had met in her excursion, and invited to dinner.

Jacintha considered their coming a very fortunate circumstance for her, as she naturally thought Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy's being engaged with company, would enable her to see lord Gwytherin with greater ease and less danger of detection, than she could otherwise have done; yet, notwithstanding this idea, she still looked forward to her meeting him with trembling apprehension, and so great at times were her terrors of the consequences which might ensue from doing so, that nothing but her strong anxiety to be informed of her mother, could have kept her faithful to her appointment.

The conversation during dinner was pretty general, and tolerably lively, and it was past eight ere the ladies retired from the parlour.

Confused and irresolute, Jacintha hesitated upon the stairs whether she should follow them into the drawing-room or not. During this hesitation, they had entered it, which she no sooner perceived, than she turned into a passage which led to a flight of back-stairs, by which she descended to the breakfast-parlour, where a dull fire still burned; she fastened the door by which she entered, and then lightly stepping to the one that

opened upon the lawn, unbolted it, and beheld lord Gwytherin at a little distance, slowly walking before it. The moment he saw her, he hastened to her, and taking her hand, pressed it in expressive silence to his lips.

Jacintha trembled violently as she admitted him into the parlour, and for some minutes could scarcely articulate a word.

Lord Gwytherin endeavoured to re-assure her. As soon as she was a little composed, he informed her that after they had parted, he had received a letter requiring his immediate return to town.

"I should have been miserable," continued he, "had I departed without satisfying the curiosity I knew I had excited in your mind, and again entreating you to try and overcome the unhappy prejudices which, I know, you have conceived against me."

"I am all impatience, my lord," said Jacintha, without appearing to notice these last words, "for the particulars you have promised to communicate. Besides, I am fearful of being too long absent."

"I cannot," said lord Gwytherin, in a low voice, and seating Jacintha and himself as he spoke, "reveal the circumstances which you are so desirous of learning, without previously declaring, that the errors (if you will permit me to call them by so mild a term), which, in the course of my narrative, I must acknowledge having committed, were owing more to education than to disposition, lest, if wholly unexcused, they should lead you to imagine me totally unworthy of your esteem and regard; which, to obtain, would, I assure you, confer upon me the highest happiness."

Here he paused, and looking earnestly at Jacintha, expecting, perhaps, some complimentary answer from her. If he did so, however, he was disappointed, for Jacintha was too sincere to speak a language foreign to the feelings of her heart; and, after a short silence, he resumed his narrative.

“Instructed rather in the art of gratifying than restraining my passions, which, from being naturally ardent, particularly needed controul; brought up amidst scenes of dissipation, and launched, at an early period of life, into a world abounding with temptations for the rich, the great, and the inexperienced.....temptations, which sometimes not all the boasted stoicism of the philosopher can enable him to resist; can it excite wonder that I, who neither possessed coolness nor caution, and was a stranger alike to moral precept and example, should yield to their seductions, and be led into actions inconsistent with virtue?”

Here he again paused, in hopes, perhaps, of hearing something from Jacintha, which might enable him to ascertain whether she admitted the apology he offered for his conduct; but she was silent, and he soon proceeded.

“The sensibility of my heart, and the warmth of my disposition, rendered me particularly susceptible of the attractions of your sex; but, notwithstanding the homage I paid to them....the tenderness, the admiration they inspired, I was resolutely determined against marrying; not so much from a consciousness of any inconstancy in my temper, as from the many instances I had seen of conjugal infidelity and infelicity. If I ever felt inclined to change this resolution, it certainly was in favour of your mother, who was un-



doubtedly the most lovely and bewitching creature I ever beheld."

"Tell me," cried Jacintha, no longer able to controul her strong impatience, "tell me," said she, scarcely able to speak, and involuntarily resting her hand upon his arm, "who was my mother?"

"A sister of Mr. Decourcy's."

"Good heaven! a sister of Mr. Decourcy's!" exclaimed Jacintha, with uplifted hands and eyes.

"Yes. She was educated in Ireland, and sent, when about seventeen, to an aunt in London, for the purpose, I believe, of being advantageously settled. She received the very particular attentions I paid her, almost from the moment we became acquainted, with evident pleasure; but notwithstanding my vanity, that vanity so natural to the youthful mind, I could not avoid perceiving I was more indebted for her smiles to my rank and fortune, than to my person and accomplishments. I was piqued on making this discovery. We all like to be regarded merely for our own merits, and not for any accidental advantages we may possess; and, in consequence of it, I thought myself justifiable in forming designs against her. In these designs I was soon too successful: while she imagined she was drawing me into her net, I completely entangled her in mine. You shudder. My conduct certainly was very culpable, and I review it myself, I assure you, with very great remorse: but, after all, it is your total ignorance of mankind which makes it appear so very atrocious to you. Vices and virtues are lessened and increased by comparison; and I have no doubt, when you acquire a greater knowledge in the world, of the deceits which are practised, the dreadful crimes

that are daily perpetrated in it, that you will look with more lenity than you do at present upon my actions."

"Heaven forbid," said Jacintha, "that I should only be taught mercy for the frailties of one fellow-creature, by hearing of the superior enormities of another!"

"And yet nothing is more common, nothing is more natural," cried lord Gwytherin. "We think of the plunderer with indignation, till we hear of the assassin; and rail with severity against the flattery of the sycophant, till we hear of the ingratitude of the friend."

"I allow the justness of what you say, my lord," replied Jacintha; "but pray proceed in your narrative. I am all impatience to learn the fate of my unfortunate mother."

"Sorrow and repentance followed her deviation from virtue," continued he, "both of which, I assure you, I afterwards felt in their fullest extent, for my conduct towards her."

"Tired by her incessant reproaches and importunate demands to make atonement for her wrongs, I at length detached myself entirely from her, and flew to amusement, as a resource against the regret and compunction which would now and then, even at that period, when I was volatile and unthinking, misled by company, and hardened by example, obtrude upon my mind on her account."

"Ah!" said Jacintha, involuntarily, "you might have found a much easier and more effectual way of banishing those feelings, than by flying to dissipation."

Lord Gwytherin sighed deeply, or at least affected to do so; and, after the pause of a minute, proceeded.

"I almost dread to go on," said he, "lest I should injure myself irrevocably in your opinion."

"Oh, my lord!" exclaimed Jacintha, "surely you would not have the barbarity to leave me in this state of suspense?"

Well," said he, "I will proceed, begging you to remember, that if my enormities have been great, my penitence is sincere. In a short time after I had bidden your mother a last adieu, I became acquainted with Mrs. Decourcy. She was then unmarried; from the beauty which she still possesses, you may judge what she must have been in the early part of her life. To the unrivalled loveliness she then possessed, were united a simplicity, an innocence irresistibly attractive. I beheld her with instantaneous admiration, and as instantly resolved to attempt the conquest of her heart. Success crowned the attempt; but the designs I hoped to accomplish, in consequence of that success....."

"Were defeated," exclaimed Jacintha.

"They were. Through your mother's means she was rescued from my snares."

"Oh, blessed and happy interference!" cried Jacintha.

"Be assured," said lord Gwytherin, "though provoked and disappointed at the time I lost her, I have since sincerely rejoiced at her preservation, after what had passed; for she eloped from her home with me, under an idea that my intentions were honourable. She could not think of returning to her friends; she was therefore compelled to accept the protection of your mother; and fortunate was it for her that she did so, as it was the means of introducing her to the amiable man she afterwards married. From the period I lost her

till the present, I never saw her ; nor, without the utmost difficulty, could I now procure an interview with her, though I came hither merely for that purpose."

" But she was the person whom you met in the demesne," said Jacintha.

" She was," replied he. " On coming hither, I took up my abode in an obscure inn at Hatfield, from whence a confidential servant had a letter conveyed to her by a country-boy, containing an earnest request from me, to be permitted to converse with her a few minutes in private relative to you. She at first refused this request ; but, on its being repeated, at length consented to meet me ; but not all my solicitations could prevail on her to make you acquainted with the secret of your birth, for the purpose of doing which I alone sought an interview with her."

" And what reason," asked Jacintha, rather hesitatingly, " did she assign for wishing me not to know it ?"

" Oh ! many reasons, too tedious here to repeat, none of which I could allow to be just ; in short, my heart was bent upon making the discovery, for I could not endure the idea of still continuing to be an object of error and aversion to you. Besides, the love I felt for your mother....a love which, little as my conduct agrees with the assertion, never knew any great diminution, urged me to assure her child of my affection, and endeavour to inspire her with some degree of reciprocal tenderness.

" As I could neither intrude into Mrs. Decourcy's house, nor force her to reveal the secret I was so desirous you should hear, I resolved, from time to time, to hover about your habitation till I could

obtain an opportunity for disclosing it myself. I have at length succeeded in doing so ; and should it occasion any alteration in your sentiments.... should it create in your bosom any interest in my favour, I shall feel greater happiness than I ever before experienced. Tell me then, my dear and charming girl, tell me that you will, in future, try to look upon me as a father, and forget and forgive my past offences."

"May Heaven forgive them !" said Jacintha.

His lordship piously ejaculated, "Amen !" Then taking her hand, he was pressing it with fervour to his lips, when Jacintha, shuddering, involuntarily withdrew it from him.

Immediately, however, recollecting herself, she said, though without returning it....

"I hope, my lord, I shall never be forgetful of the duties of a daughter."

"Those duties," thought she, "which were so early taught me by the best of men. Ah ! if he who now acknowledges himself my father, resembled him whom I believed so long to be so, what very different feelings should I at this instant experience !"

"I am sure you never will," replied he, "and I derive pleasure from the assurance ; but it is a pleasure, damped by the idea of not being able to acknowledge you publicly, and proudly boast to the world of such a daughter ; but the fame of your mother, as well as many other considerations, totally prevent such a measure."

"You have not yet, my lord," said she, "gratified my anxious curiosity respecting my mother ; nor informed me by what, or rather by whose means, I was placed under the care of Mr. Greville."

"Your mother," resumed his lordship, "made Mrs. Decourcy her confidant; and she was the person who consigned you to the protection of Mr. Greville, to be brought up as his child, and with a strict injunction to secrecy, which I am certain he would not have adhered to; but...."

Here lord Gwytherin faltered; and appeared embarrassed; and Jacintha again became violently agitated.

"The moment I learned our relationship," continued lord Gwytherin, recovering from his confusion, "I would have acquainted you with it, had not Mr. Greville dissuaded me from doing so, by a variety of arguments not necessary here to mention; but so restless and unhappy did I feel in consequence of yielding to them, that I was on the point of returning to Wyefield, when I received an account of his death, and your departure from it."

"But my mother," interrupted Jacintha; "tell me, my lord, of her."

"She lives," said he, "in the possession of every blessing this life can bestow."

Jacintha started, and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"In the possession of happiness and honour," resumed he, "she lives. A faithful wife, an estimable mother; beloved by her intimates, and admired by all who know her."

"Then I find," said Jacintha, "I have been utterly mistaken. I imagined my mother to be the eldest sister of Mr. Decourcy, who, many years ago, I have heard Mrs. Decourcy say, conceived a dislike to the world, and retired to a convent in France, though without taking the vows."

"No," replied lord Gwytherin, "your mother is his youngest sister, the countess of Dunsane. Soon after your birth (of which it was her intention I should never hear,) she accompanied some friends to the continent, where she met the earl, the descendant of a noble Irish family; who, in consequence of their attachment to the cause of James the Second, lost the principal part of their property in Ireland; but, by splendored alliances in France, regained nearly an equivalent for it. The earl became her captive almost the moment he beheld her, and soon made proposals, which she accepted without hesitation."

"Without hesitation!" repeated Jacintha.

"Yes; by him she has obtained dignities she was always ambitious of possessing, and has two lovely daughters, over whom she watches with all the solicitude of a tender parent."

"Is she then so much engrossed by these happy daughters," said Jacintha, with starting tears, "as to be utterly regardless of me? Alas! have the unfortunate circumstances under which I was born drawn so great a curse upon me, as to deprive me of my mother's love?"

"Regard for her reputation prevented her from noticing you," cried lord Gwytherin; "but I cannot suppose you are either forgotten or disregarded."

"Oh! could I hope so," said Jacintha. "Oh! could I hope ever to be known to her....ever to experience from her the kindness, the attention of a mother, what happiness should I derive from the idea!"

"Well, do not despair," replied lord Gwytherin; "some lucky chance may yet introduce you to her; and I am certain she could not know you, without admiring and esteeming you."

"I wish I could think so," said Jacintha, with fervour. She then proceeded to ask so many questions concerning this mother (for whom, notwithstanding the high disapprobation with which her conduct had inspired her, she felt all her tenderness awakened), that lord Gwytherin at length became weary of answering her, and shifted the discourse, to question her, in his turn, concerning Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy's conduct towards her. On this she expatiated with all the warmth of gratitude, carefully avoiding any expression which could convey an idea of her ever having thought their affection on the decline.

Lord Gwytherin professed himself highly pleased with what she had told him; but begged to know whether she yet knew what their intentions were respecting her.

"I never bestowed a thought upon such a subject, my lord," replied Jacintha.

"Well, well, I dare say they'll act nobly by you," said his lordship.

"They have already done so, my lord," cried Jacintha, warmly. "But for them, disclaimed and unacknowledged as I was, without a home, without a refuge, in how unpleasant a situation might I have been at present!"

"True," said he, with an indifference in his manner which hurt Jacintha, and seemed strange, after his professions of affection for her; "true, their taking you under their protection was a very fortunate circumstance indeed; and I assure you, I should be much more miserable than I am at present, from not being able to take you under mine, but for the happy manner in which you are situated."



Jacintha sighed deeply, but did not speak ; and he proceeded to ask her a few other questions relative to Egbert, which she answered very briefly, as they evidently appeared to her to be dictated more by curiosity, than any solicitude about his welfare.

He then rose to depart ; but ere he bade her adieu, he put into her hand a miniature resemblance of himself, which had been presented by him to her mother, and returned by her, when all hopes of an honourable union between them were dissolved. Jacintha received with trembling emotion, what her fancy immediately represented to her had been bedewed with the repentant tears of a mother, and placed it in her bosom.

He repeated his assurances of regard, and expressed his earnest hopes that she would endeavour to cultivate other sentiments for him, than those he feared she at present entertained ; and made her promise she would, as often as possible, give him an opportunity of conversing with her, which, he said, he doubted not she would often have the power of doing, through Mrs. Decourcy's means, to whom, he supposed, she meant to communicate what he had told her.

Jacintha replied in the affirmative. For her intended communication to Mrs. Decourcy she had indeed a double motive ; first, to obtain a more circumstantial account of the particulars she wished to learn, than she had received from his lordship, whose broken, disjointed and cursory narrative had not by any means gratified her curiosity ; and, secondly, to consult with her how she should regulate her actions with respect to him ; for since their relationship was to be kept an inviolable secret, she dreaded, from the peculiar delicacy of

her situation, the irreparable injury she might do herself by having any correspondence with him. And yet, notwithstanding this dread, she almost felt a reluctance to decline it entirely, from the impression which his repeated assurances of affection had made upon her. Could she have looked into his heart, however, this reluctance would instantly have vanished; for she would then have perceived that he was not more a stranger to any thing like tenderness for her, than to any thing like repentance for his past enormities; that the most selfish considerations had alone induced him to disclose the secret of her birth; and that, had she been unnoticed by her present protectors, she would have never been noticed by him.

When his atrocious designs against her impelled Mr. Greville to divulge the connection between them, he perfectly agreed with that good man, in thinking it right to keep her still, as well as every other person, in ignorance of it.

The remorse and horror with which his conduct towards her had involuntarily inspired him, were of short duration, and on quitting the country, he ceased entirely to think about her; nor was she ever recalled to his remembrance till he heard of her being taken under the protection of Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy, and that she was considered as the person who would possess the largest portion of their wealth.

The advantages which might, nay, would result (he doubted not, from her general character, and his own knowledge of her disposition) to him hereafter, from his relationship to her being known, immediately occurred to him, and determined him to conceal it no longer from her.

The measures he took to put this determination into execution, have been already explained. He possessed too much discernment not to discover the feelings which Jacintha at present entertained for him ; but he flattered himself his affected tenderness, and insinuating manners, would by degrees completely overcome them, and give him such an ascendancy over her mind as, for his own sake, he wished to acquire. Though he doubted not her receiving a more particular account of past occurrences from Mrs. Decourcy than she had received from him, he felt no great apprehensions at this idea ; as he was almost persuaded, that Mrs. Decourcy was far too amiable to dwell upon any circumstances which had a tendency to create or strengthen a prejudice in the bosom of a child against a parent.

“ My ardent anxiety to discover my parents, is then at length satisfied,” said Jacintha to herself, as lord Gwytherin departed from her ; “ but has it occasioned me any pleasure ? Ah ! no. Whilst they were unknown to me, I believed them virtuous, and rejoiced in the belief ; but now.....”

She checked the reflections that were rising in her mind, and crossing the room with cautious steps, unbolted the door.

## CHAP. XV.

" Methought, ev'n now, I mark'd the starts of guilt  
" That shook her soul."

ROWE.

" Under how hard a fate are women born !  
" Priz'd to their ruin, or expos'd to scorn !"

WALLER.

TO give a just idea of the consternation into which Jacintha was thrown, when, on opening the door, she beheld Woodville speaking to a servant within a few paces of it, is utterly impossible. She started back, and for a minute remained immoveable ; then recollecting that her confusion of itself was sufficient to confirm any suspicions he might entertain against her, she again came forward, and passed him in silence to the stair-case. Had she indeed been inclined to speak to him, his conduct would have effectually prevented her from doing so ; for, as she approached, he turned from her with an angry and contemptuous glance, which clearly proved the ideas that then predominated in his mind.

Confused and agitated, Jacintha would have preferred going to her chamber, to the drawing-room, had she not feared exciting unpleasant inquiries or surmises, by longer absenting herself from the latter ; thither therefore she repaired, and found all the

dinner party assembled. No questions were asked concerning her long absence from the company, and she would have felt happy could she have flattered herself no observations were made upon it. But that this was not the case, the behaviour of Woodville convinced her; and she resolved on acquainting Mrs. Decourcy the next morning with what she had heard this day, and advising with her on what measures she should take for endeavouring to remove his injurious ideas respecting her. Soon after she had entered the drawing-room, he returned to it, but continued cool and reserved throughout the evening.

The uneasiness of Jacintha was considerably increased by finding, on retiring to her chamber, that she had dropped lord Gwytherin's letter from her pocket. She would immediately have gone in search of it, could she have flattered herself the search would prove successful; but that this would be the case she could not think, from the length of time which had elapsed since she lost it. She dreaded its having fallen into Woodville's hands, from the necessity such a circumstance would lay her under of revealing (in order to remove the unpleasant suspicions it must naturally confirm in his mind) the truth concerning lord Gwytherin, which she could have wished, from pride as well as other feelings, only to have disclosed to Egbert.

The agitation of her mind precluded sleep; and, at an early hour the next morning, she was in the breakfast-parlour, where she endeavoured to amuse herself by reading, till Mrs. Decourcy made her appearance.

"I have got a letter for you, Jacintha," said Mrs. Decourcy, as she entered the parlour.

“ For me, madam,” cried Jacintha, in a joyful accent ; for it instantly occurred to her that she had found the letter about which she was so uneasy.

“ Yes. Woodville set off for town this morning before it was light ; and, in a letter which he left for me to apologize for his abrupt departure, owing, he said, to the sudden recollection of some business he had to transact in town to-day, he enclosed one for you ; about the contents of which, he added, if I felt curious, he was certain you would inform me.”

“ Undoubtedly, madam,” said Jacintha, as she received the letter, which contained the following lines :

“ I should ill deserve a title which has hitherto given me pleasure....the title of your friend, if, perceiving the dangers you are incurring, I did not warn you of them. The most fatal consequences can scarcely fail of resulting from your continuing to have private interviews with lord Gwytherin. If your heart feels a preference for him, for heaven's sake, avow it to those who have a right to inquire into his intentions respecting you (which Mr. and Mrs. Decourcy undoubtedly have, from your being under their immediate protection), and no longer trifle with your reputation and happiness....blessings which, be assured, if once lost, can never be regained. The most ardent solicitude about your welfare has dictated this letter, and to hear you have attended to it, will confer real pleasure upon

“ H. WOODVILLE.”

“ How unfortunate,” thought Jacintha, “ that he should have left the country with such unfavourable impressions against me !”

"What's the matter, my dear girl?" asked Mrs. Decourcy, with a greater air of cheerfulness than she had for a long time before spoken to Jacintha, observing her change colour. "I really am beginning to feel some curiosity about the contents of that letter, since I perceive it has affected you."

"Your curiosity shall be gratified after breakfast, madam," replied Jacintha, "if you will permit me to attend you to your dressing-room. I have much, besides the contents of this letter, to impart to you."

"To me," said Mrs. Decourcy, with a look expressive of surprise; and she was about making some inquiry, when the entrance of Mr. Decourcy prevented her.

Jacintha could no longer entertain the smallest doubt of Woodville's having found her lost letter, and discovered her interview the preceding evening with lord Gwytherin. She was not mistaken in thinking so; he had indeed done both. On rising to accompany the other gentlemen to the drawing-room, he found the letter, which she had drawn from her pocket with her handkerchief, near his chair, and which an irresistible curiosity immediately prompted him to read. Fired with indignation by its perusal, he hastily ascended to the drawing-room, to see whether she was there; on missing her, and learning from Mrs. Decourcy, to whom he made a trembling inquiry respecting her, that she had been long absent, he abruptly quitted it, for the purpose of searching for her without the house; and was taking his hat from a servant, when he heard her unbolt the parlour-door, and saw her coming from it.

A sudden impulse of resentment and disdain made him turn from her, and he did not re-enter the drawing-room till the agitation, which her supposed duplicity had thrown him into, had in some degree subsided.

To remonstrate with her upon the impropriety of her conduct, after all he had already said to her upon that subject, would, he feared, be unavailing; and the only expedient he could devise for saving her from the destruction he believed impending over her, was to acquaint the friends, with whom she resided, of the danger she was incurring. From an open and abrupt disclosure, however, his feelings revolted; all he could bring himself to do, was to lead to an inquiry which should discover it. For the purpose of exciting this enquiry, he contrived a pretext for writing to Mrs. Decourcy, dropping such hints in his letter to her, about the one he enclosed in it for Jacintha, as could not fail, he thought, of making her solicitous to learn its contents, and oblige Jacintha to disclose them.

The moment breakfast was over, Mrs. Decourcy repaired to her dressing-room followed by Jacintha, whose promised communication she was impatient to hear. The emotions she betrayed, while listening to it, were not inferior to those Jacintha manifested.

"I own," said Mrs Decourcy, after she had concluded, "I was very unwilling you should be acquainted with the secret of your birth, from a conviction that a knowledge of it could impart no happiness to you. 'Tis infinitely more distressing, I think, to know we have relations, who either cannot, or will not acknowledge us, than to know we are unconnected. But, since lord



Gwytherin has disclosed what I was so desirous of concealing, I can have no objection to gratifying the curiosity he has excited. The account he has given of past circumstances is brief indeed, and slightly has he touched upon his own conduct; this, however, is but natural. We generally draw our own portraits in flattering colours. Do not imagine, however, from what I have said, that I think him now by any means the character he formerly was; no, I really am inclined to believe him sincerely penitent for his past errors."

"I hope so," said Jacintha, with fervour.

"Indeed, I cannot doubt this being so," continued Mrs. Decourcy; "and, but for the idea I have already mentioned, and some apprehensions I shall hereafter explain, I should, without hesitation, have introduced him to you by his proper appellation. That he disregarded all I said, to dissuade him against the discovery he has made, I do not wonder at; for who that had such a child, would not wish to claim her, if but for the purpose of trying to inspire her with favourable sentiments for them?"

"Could I hope my mother would ever receive me....." said Jacintha.

"Publicly she never can," replied Mrs. Decourcy; "nor situated as she is at present, could she in any manner do so."

Jacintha sighed, and remained silent for some minutes. She then entreated Mrs. Decourcy to favour her with the particulars she was so desirous of learning.





